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BALLADS

♥ AND ♥

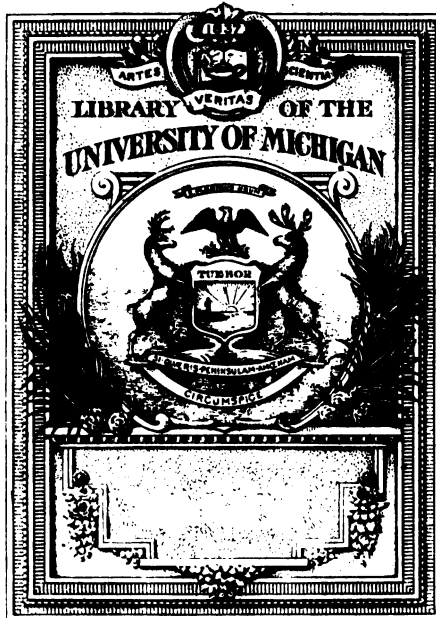
♥ POEMS ♥



♥ GLASGOW ♥

BALLAD CLUB.

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Ser. 2

BALLADS AND POEMS

The Glasgow Ballad Club

BALLADS AND POEMS

BY

MEMBERS OF
THE GLASGOW BALLAD CLUB



SECOND SERIES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCVIII

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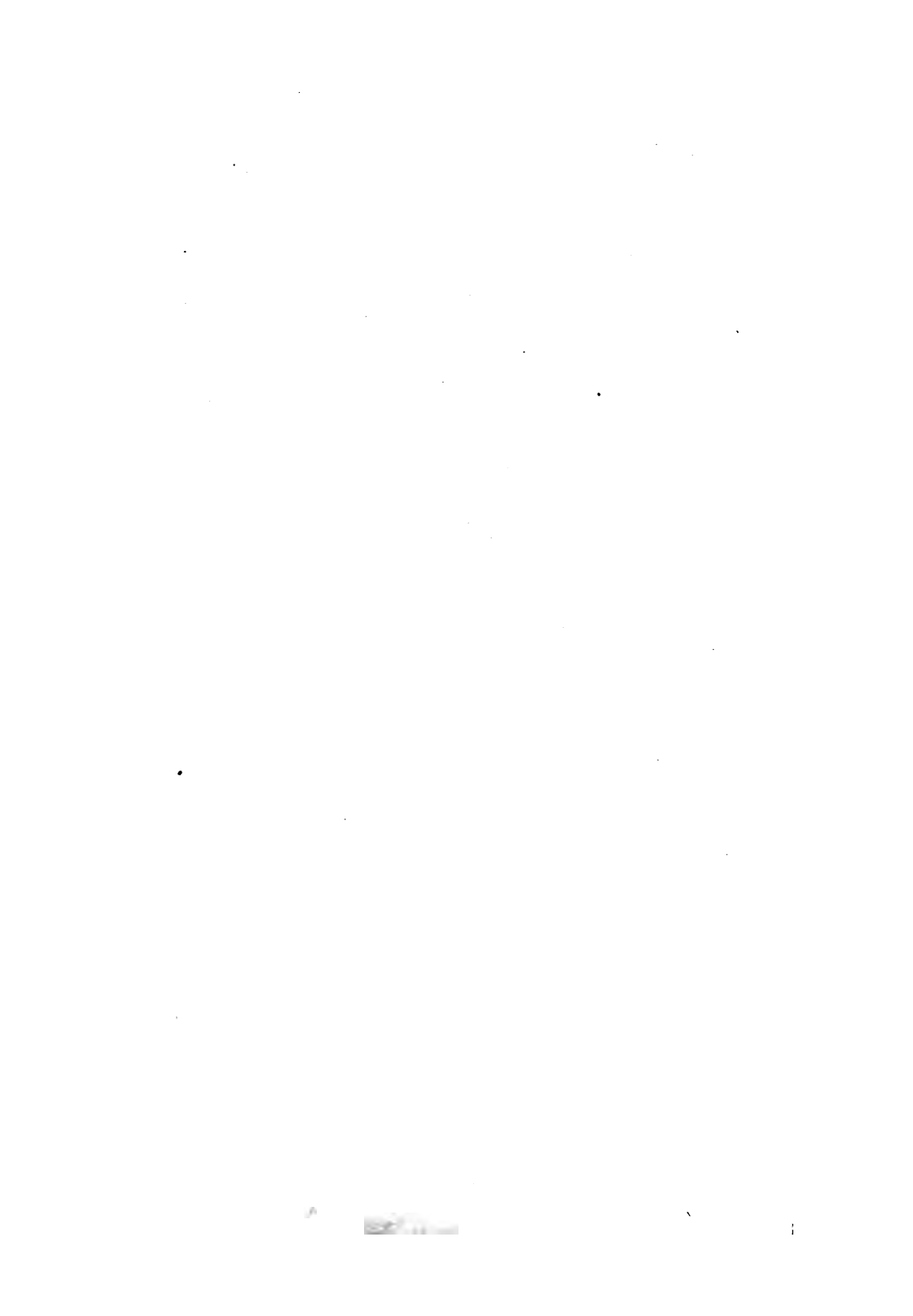
NOTE.

THE GLASGOW BALLAD CLUB was formed in 1876 for the study of Ballads and Ballad Literature, and the production and friendly criticism of original ballads,—the word “ballad” being interpreted in a sense sufficiently wide to include lyrical poems.

In 1885 a volume was published which contained a selection from the contributions of members down to the end of 1883.

The materials for the present Volume have been selected from the poems contributed during the past years.

March 1898.



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BALLADS AND POEMS

A BALLAD OF BORDERLAND.

There learned the Bard to think, and find
The depth and compass of his mind.
He saw the pebble on the shore
The vision of the star restore ;
And in the new lamb's gentle face
A beam of innocence and grace,
And in his baby's wondering eyes
The instant glory of the skies.
Within the skylark's gentle theme
He heard an angel's mightier dream,
Vast breathings from the spherul strand—
The music of the Borderland.

The Borderland :
Ah ! who shall wield the magic wand,
And roll the clouds away, and sing
The beauty of a newer Spring ?
Not he, the poet, sweet of tongue,
Who chanted when the years were young
As prophet of the dawn, to whom
Hope ever wore a dancing plume
That caught the earlier beams of time,
Sweet sunlight to his golden rhyme.
Whither he wanders who may guess,
Or free him from the silent stress ?
Mayhap he lingers as of yore
On Yarrow Braes or Tweed's green shore,

A BALLAD OF BORDERLAND.

Holding high converse with the brave
Whose souls still haunt the wood and wave ;
Lamenting in the barren bowers
The absence of the Forest Flowers ;
Mingling poetic strains with those
Whose ballads healed a nation's woes ;
Or sitting, touched with glamourie,
Beneath the witching Eildon Tree,
Waiting the ripening of the spells
To bring, with jingling fairy bells,
True Thomas with a new command,
High genius of the Borderland.

The Borderland :
Ah ! where are now the happy band
With whom we sported on the lea,
Or sailed the sparkling summer sea,
Still dreaming of the golden isles
Where beauty wears ethereal smiles ;
Where love is pure, and man is king
Of his own soul in everything ?
Wearied of home-bred things that be,
They seek a far felicity,
While sweet contentment sits at home
And wonders why the heroes roam.
Will they come back and bring with them
A wallet or a diadem ?

A BALLAD OF BORDERLAND.

Or do they starve in plenteous climes,
Weaving their everlasting rhymes?
Or have they found ungenerous graves
Where kings are fools and statesmen knaves?
Or do they live in sceptred state
To show how genius can be great?
Alas! I know not; but I hear
Like murmurs from a happy sphere,
The noble music that they made
As minstrels in their native shade,
When, fiery-tongued, they sang to rout
The deity that prompteth doubt,
Not knowing then that doubt is still
The servant of the Heavenly Will,
And slays more foes of truth and good
Than ever priesthood understood.
They know it now, for they have power
To slip the error of the hour,
And follow forth, or near or far,
Sweet science, the new morning star,
The potent glory of whose beams
Dazzles to death the evil dreams
Which held in thrall the souls of men
For ages in a twilight pen—
Between the dawning and the dark
The screech of owl, the song of lark,

A BALLAD OF BORDERLAND.

The wind that chilled, the wing that fanned
New life across that Borderland.

The Borderland :
Lo ! where the hills so godlike stand :
Though deep in earth from chaos born
They rear their foreheads to the morn,
And hear within each pulsing gleam
The music of the solar beam.
So our loved bard, though born in Glens,
Outsoars the stature of the Bens ;
And moves, unawed, within the track
Starred by the circling Zodiac :
Unawed, yet solemn-eyed, he sees
Glints of still grander mysteries
Than wisest sage hath ever scanned
In his beloved Borderland.

A Dear Little Maid of Two.

I'LL sing you a song to a nursery tune,
Of a dear little maid of two,
Who has peachen cheeks and rosebud lips,
And eyes of a soft sea-blue ;
With charms of a gleeful innocence,
That are ripe at the age of two.

She is not an angel, no, no, no,
And heaven be praised for that !
She is fairly human from top to toe,
With limbs that are daintily fat ;
And where she trots, be it high or low
There is wealth of surprising chat.

Somebody's heart is strong and brave,
And Somebody's love is true,—
By day, by night, they are amply tried,
By this little maid of two ;
But Somebody's love would never tire,
Had it ten times more to do.

A DEAR LITTLE MAID OF TWO.

What reward does Somebody get,
Dear dreamer with eyes of blue?—
A kiss, a smile from the roguish pet,
A tender caress or two.
A rich reward, when the debt is paid
By a sweet little maid like you.

Come, happy sprite with the sea-bright eyes,
And prattle about my knee ;
Press close your fond round cheek to mine,
And laugh in innocent glee ;
That childish talk and downy touch
Give joy and strength to me.

Then grow, my sweet, as well as you may,
And be like Somebody, true ;
For Somebody now so tall and good
Was once as tiny as you.—
And in the maiden of twenty-one
May we find the maid of two !

Adie.

"PLAY me something, Uncle, dear!"

"Yes! What like ye best to hear?"

"Angels ever bright and fair

Take, oh take me to your care."

Now the air is warbled slow

With a trembling touch and low,

Adie's eyelids slowly close,

Adie sinks in soft repose.

See how soundly Adie sleeps!

See how long his breath he keeps!

And his breast that heaved so sore,

See it swells in pain no more!

Ay! full soundly Adie sleeps,

Ay! for aye his breath he keeps,

"Angels ever bright and fair

Take and keep him in your care."

Note.—Adie, a youth of eighteen, asked his uncle to play an air on the violin, and while the air was being played, died.

A Dirge.

ARE you asleep, Helen ?
How pale pale your cheek !
How dreary my dwellin',
Since you ceased to speak !

The light hath departed,
And I am tear-blind,
Alone, broken-hearted,
And darkened in mind.

Helen, will you waken,
And ope your dear eyes ?
Know you I'm forsaken,
And hope in me dies ?

O sorrow ! pale blossom !
Dead Helen ! you seem
A dream in my bosom,
A rose in a dream.

A DIRGE.

Burd Helen, burd Helen,
Since death is so sweet,
I'll come to your dwellin'
And lie at your feet.

Our hearts that were riven
Shall heal and be whole,
And in the kind heaven
Soul mingle with soul.

Afterwards.

RAN a child,—when skies went clear,
When the rain had spent its might,
When the sun, with laggard cheer,
Jewelled up the land with light,—

Ran a child with shining feet,
Them to dabble where the flood
Danced a-down the village street
Quick with dead leaves, dark with mud.

When the merry tide had passed,
Shallow pools of magic dye
Gathered to themselves the vast
Vision of the evening sky.

Then the child,—made still with awe
By this spread of crimson grace,—
Peered into a pool, and saw
Heaven about a little face.

AFTERWARDS.

Home he went with loitered feet ;
Sought a silent place apart ;
For to him the night was sweet,
With this wonder in his heart.

Sad ! the child with morning trust,
Sought that pool of wondrous dye,
But he found a thin grey dust
Where had shone a piece of sky !

A Highland Reel.

A WOMAN sat in a tramway car,
As it laboured up the street,—
An ill-clad woman with weary face,
And wearier ill-shod feet.
A hawker, plainly, the woman was,
As looking I could see
By her basket, stocked with heavy ware
And weight of trumpery.

Her face dim-eyed and listless,
Weary and callous and worn,
Begot of many a toilsome mile,
And many a burthen borne.
A face, methought, that had not known
A smile for many a year,
And, sadder still, that had ceased to feel
The relief of a woman's tear.

A HIGHLAND REEL.

My heart felt sore for her toilsome lot,
And thought it beyond compare
As hard a lot as could well be given
A poor weak woman to bear.
To trudge the longsome weary miles,
For sales that were scant and few,
While the more she sold of her heavy stock
Her load still the heavier grew.

Oh, weary world !—when suddenly
The car drew up, and the sound
Of clattering hoofs and rumbling wheels
Has ceased, and all around
There rose on the ear, in strident tones,
A wondrous merry peal—
The sound of a street piano playing
A cheery Highland reel.

And lo, a miracle befell !
That hawker woman there
Became by it transfigured—
’Twas passing strange and rare.
Her listless face woke into life,
The sad eyes filled with light,
Her face shone, and its brightness made
The shabby garments bright.

A HIGHLAND REEL.

Her whole being seemed to make response
To the measure of the reel,
And her ill-shod feet beneath her gown
Beat time with toe and heel.

I gazed in wonder—when, alas !
The car went on again,
And its rumbling wheels, like the grind of life,
Shut out the magic strain.
But still that toil-worn woman's face
Grew brighter for the day,—
And I, who beheld the miracle,
Thanked God and went my way.

Alichmore.

A HALLOWEEN BALLAD.

It was Halloween, and the daffin' was dune,
And a' were boun to bed ;
And oot ower the muir at ilk wee farm-toun
The balefires smouldered red.

The lights were a' oot at Alichmore,
The watch-dog was asleep,
And ploughman lad, and serving man,
Lay wrapped in slumber deep.

But the douce guidman o' Alichmore,
A waukrife wicht was he,—
He heard the langsome hours gae by
Yet ne'er could close an e'e.

ALICHMORE.

And the young guidwife o' Alichmore
In her sleep she moaned and mourned,
But o' what she spak he could naething mak',
As she wearily tossed and turned.

"O, dinna ye hear the bairn, guidwife,
That sabs sae sair, I wat ;
O, dinna ye hear the bonnie bairn
That a' nicht lang has grat ?

"O, dinna ye hear how our ain wee bairn
Maks sic a troublous maen ?"
He called her aloud, and her brow he touched,
But answer made she nane.

And her brow it burned as she wearily turned
And moaned like a soul forfairn ;
She heard na' the voice o' her ain guidman
Nor the cry o' her ain young bairn.

"O, meikle, meikle I dreid, guidwife,
Some cantrip spell or charm,
Some Halloween slicht, is on ye this nicht :
Saints shield us a' frae harm !"

ALICHMORE.

Syne muttered he ower her gudely words
Gin they the charm micht break,
And he sained her wi' the haly Cross,
Yet still she did not wake.

Then he's taen up the bonnie bairn,
Lay low down at their feet,
And he's taen up the bonnie bairn
That mournfully did greet.

He has laid it to the mither's breast,
And the bairnie ceased its maen,
And the wife wi' a sigh and an eerie cry
Cam back to the world again.

"O, wherefore didna ye wauken me?
Sic a dream as I hae haen;
O, wherefore left ye me to sleep,
And dree sic dule and pain?"

"I tried richt sair to wauken you,
But ye moaned like a soul forfairn,
And ye heard na the voice o' your ain guidman,
Nor the cry o' your ain wee bairn.

ALICHMORE.

"Yet tell your dream, whate'er it be,—
For freits ne'er let us fear;
Noo you've waukened oot o' that awesome sleep,
And the halesome day is near."

"I wandered far ower a muirlan' road,
On a winter nicht alane,
Whaur a waesome wind soughed through the bent,
And wailed like a ghaist in pain.

"The lift abune was a starless pall,
And black were the muirs aroun',
And frae oot the moss and the quaking bog
Cam mony an elritch soun'.

"Richt dowie was I as I travelled along,
And my heart was heavy wi' care,
For the way was lang, and the road was rough,
And my feet were bleeding and sair.

"And aften was I richt fain to turn,
For e'en in my dream I knew
That at ilka step on that weary road
I was farther frae hame and you.

ALICHMORE.

"I kenned that I was in an unco land,
And aye as I fared alang,
A voice cam' oot o' the murky lift
Like the owercome o' a sang :
'Ye but dree your weird and your fate fulfil,
And the way that ye gae ye maun gang.'

"Sae I wandered on ower the muirlan' road,
Until in the mirk midnicht
I cam to a fair and stately house,
Wi' candles burning bricht.

"The door was wide, and I entered in
And stood in a lichted ha',
Where a woman sat at a weel-spread buird,
And her face was turned awa'.

"Richt fain was I to rest awhile,
And taste o' the gudely cheer,
When the woman she turned and looked on me,
And I swarfed awa' wi' fear.

"O, the dreid that I knew at that fearsome look
Was greater than tongue can tell,
For the een that looked into mine were my ain,
And the woman I saw was mysel'.

ALICHMORE.

"I mind nae mair, for I swarfed awa,
Wi' a wecht o' fear opprest,
Till I waukened here by my ain guidman,
Wi' the bairnie's cheek on my breast."

The douce guidman o' Alichmore
Was a waefu wicht, I ween,
For weel knew he sic things may be,
When the nicht is Halloween.

"O, you and I maun pairt, my dear,"
And he sighed richt heavily ;
"O, you and I maun pairt, my dear,
For we a' our weird maun dree.

"It's you and I maun pairt, my dear,
Though o' ilk ither fain,
And the hoose sae braw, that in vision ye saw,
Ere lang will be your ain."

Before a year had passed awa',
A year but and a day,
The douce guidman o' Alichmore
Beneath the mools he lay.

ALICHMORE.

At Alichmore the corn was green,
And the lift wi' laverocks rang,
When a gay young rider cam riding by,
And aye as he rade he sang :

“O, is there never a bonnie bride,
That somewhere waits for me?
O, is there never a bonnie bride,
To be my destinie?”

And, standing in her weeds o' black,
Amang the corn sae green,
Was the young guidwife o' Alichmore,—
He kenned her weel, I ween.
For her form before had crossed his door,
That fateful Halloween.

A Lowland Stream.

FAR up, amidst the silent hills,
By lonely, unfrequented ways,
Where unhistoric, nameless rills
Sing through long summer days ;
Round verdant banks by hazels hung,
Then glistening feathery ferns among,
As if in beatific dream,
Fair glides the peaceful, Lowland stream.

Where pensive Meditation broods
By mossy bank and ruin grey,
In sacred, silent solitudes,
Through all the summer day ;
Where, through the sultry noonday calms,
Steals faint the far-off bleat of lambs,
Its rich, idyllic music fills
The silence of the pastoral hills.

A LOWLAND STREAM.

Where moorcocks fly on whirring wings,
And loud is heard the curlew's call ;
Where rich and long the throstle sings
At sober gloaming's fall ;
Where owlets from the lone peel-tower
Hoot through the silent midnight hour,
Its waters catch, with mystic sigh,
Faint echoes of the days gone by.

Gone is the past, deep down through Time,—
The flashing blade, the bugle's call,
The lover's sigh, the minstrel's rhyme,—
And silence reigns o'er all.
The halls where blazoned shields were hung
In pride of place, are now unsung !
All, all is now an empty name,
Yet flows the crystal stream the same.

By its green banks joy oft was born
Far back on many a summer day,
When, through the green and waving corn,
Dear lovers went their way.
What boots it now of royal time
When chivalry was in its prime ?—
This stream, though power and pride have flown,
Retains a music all its own.

A Lullaby.

WEE wearied Lowrie,
Come to mither's knee,
An' I'll rock you like a boatie
On the bonnie simmer sea.

Wee sleepy Lowrie,
Sairly tired wi' play,
He's been toddlin' wi' the lammie
On the hillside a' the day.

Wee rosy Lowrie,
Noo he's sleepin' soun',
An' the wee pet lam' is lookin'
For his playmate roun' an' roun'.

In amang the brackens,
Up out o'er the knowe,
He is lookin' for wee Lowrie
Wi' his bonnie flaxen pow.

A LULLABY.

Wee wearied Lowrie,
You may safely rest,
For ye'll ne'er hae kinder pillow
Than a mither's loving breast.

Ha ! there's wee lammie
Comin' toddlin' in,
An' he sees wee Lowrie's sleepin',
Sae he winna mak a din.

Wee wearied Lowrie's
Noo put to his bed,
An' he's sleepin' aye the soun'er
As the westlin' sky grows red.

Wee drookit daisies
On the dewy green
Is a lammie's sweetest nibble
E'er he goes to rest at e'en.

Twa bonnie lammies,
May you wake the morn,
An' your life be ae lang simmer
That the sweetest flowers adorn.

An Autumn Wooing.

COME, let me find thee quiet places
Where flowers blow for a maiden's hair,
Where song with sunlight interlaces
To make a sweetness in the air,
Where naught of shadow shifts upon
The place where once the sun hath shone.

O Love! it is not well to tarry
In dreams of youth when youth has fled ;
Here, rough winds have the will to harry
And grey rains wet thy weary head ;
Come with me to the land I wot,
So love shall lighten all thy lot.

Nay, nay, it is not well to linger
In foolish dreams of fancy-free ;
Fret not that gold upon thy finger
Which long ago I gave to thee ;
Say thou wilt set thy love in thrall
Lest wine of freedom turn to gall.

AN AUTUMN WOOING.

Think of the merry lads who plaited
A loop of blooms to bind thy brow,
How each has gone and all have mated ;
Their children plait the blossoms now,
While thou and I still tarry here
Upon the brown slope o' the year.

Much have we seen of sunless weather,
Much have we borne of bitter wind,
Since thro' the lanes we laughed together
Where thou wert coy when I was kind ;
"Wise maids should live alone," you said ;
"Tis only silly souls who wed."

Poor wit grown stale ; let us be silly ;
Sure many fools have gone before ;
When life is hard, and ways are hilly,
When wit is less and love is more,
Wise fools are they who learn the art
To share their burdens, heart with heart.

Nay, love ; I find it sweet to woo thee,
Though thou hast found me many a fret ;
The sunny maidenhood that drew me
Moves under these sad eyelids yet ;
While I do find it pleasant still
To search the mazes of thy will.

AN AUTUMN WOOING.

But we are late who loved so early ;
The sun goes sloping from above ;
Yet in the East the lights are pearly
Where I would lead thee, O my Love !
What ! still that old, fond, foolish—"No,"
Your heart speaks truer ; let us go.

Andra.

O' a' the ancient wabster race,
King o' the craft was Andra ;
His fame had spread thro' many a place,—
The toon was proud o' Andra ;
Nae mair the treddle feels his foot,
The music o' his loom is mute,
The shuttle sleeps, the wab is oot
O' the wale o' weavers, Andra.

O' learnèd speech he had a store,
A deep-read man was Andra,
For a' kinds o' ootlandish lore
Cam' easy like to Andra ;
And many a book might weel been made
Just oot o' things that he has said,—
The very minister he gaed
A wee in awe o' Andra.

NDRA.

The rulin' elder o' the Kirk,
 Sound in the faith was Andra ;
Nae heresy or doubtfu' work
 Got slippin' by wi' Andra ;
Whiles standin' wi' uncovered pate
To guard the offerin's at the gate,
And there were few forgot the plate,
 Sae stern the eye o' Andra.

And when he cam' to catechise,
 A rigorous man was Andra ;
The tremblin' weans, if they were wise,
 Kept oot the road o' Andra ;
But tho' he ran a godly race,
His was nae ill-fa'ard frownin' face,
When mirth was in its fittin' place,
 A canty man was Andra.

For politics he had the gift,
 A grip o' things had Andra,—
He kent the game, and every shift
 Was keenly watched by Andra ;
Nae man could pose him in debate,
He reeled you aff the day and date,
And kittle problems o' the state
 Were sune redd up by Andra.

ANDRA.

And when Election times cam' roun',
A dainty heckler, Andra,—
What roars o' laughter, when the loon
Got trippit up by Andra ;
The cuif was cornered unawares,
And him to haiver o' affairs !—
He had a hantle fewer airs,
When he was dune wi' Andra.

Lang may the auld toon thrive, and lang
Preserve the fame o' Andra ;
Wi' strangers now her streets are thrang,—
They didna ken our Andra ;
But native hearts, tho' far frae hame,
Gang loupin' when they hear the name,—
To them the toon's no just the same,
Wantin' the like o' Andra.

“As the World Gibeth.”

A GRECIAN worker, in the days of old,
Sat weary years a problem to unfold
In mathematics—working patient still
To bend unwilling numbers to his will.
And so toiled on, nor knew that life's bright day
From golden noon sank into evening grey.
When lo! one morn beneath his weary eyes
The task is done, and in fair figured guise
Stands writ upon his tablets, fixed for aye!
And then, elate with joy, he rushed away
Forth from his cell, into the crowd without,
And there in busy Athens raised the shout—
I've found it! I've found the secret out!
Then paused, awaiting wreaths and Fame's loud cry.
Alas!—one looked amused, then passed him by;
Another touched his brow in careless pity;
Another jeered,—but none in all the city
Seemed one whit moved on that triumphant day,
But passed the old man by and went their way.

A Wayside Calvary.

Low in the glory of the West
Calm lay the fleecy amber bars ;
Home went the weary ones to rest,
And one by one came out the stars.
The tall, dark poplars by the stream
Stood cold against the rosy sky,
Which threw its tender, lingering gleam
Upon a wayside Calvary.

The village murmurs rose and fell,—
The maiden's song so low and sweet,
The sound of holy Vesper-bell,
The children's laughter in the street ;
Whilst on that lonely wayside shrine,
Back from the quaint old hamlet's din,
There hung the Form of love divine
Who came to shrive the world from sin.

4 *WAYSIDE CALVARY.*

There came a man with silvery hair,
The lines of four-score weary years
Upon his face. His lowly prayer,
Baptised with penitential tears,
Rose to that One who hung on high
Against the slowly-dying day :
The pilgrim felt that Heaven was nigh,
And passed in peace upon his way.

With reverent step a maiden came,
All clad in maidenhood's sweet grace.
Low murmuring her loved one's name
With sinless blush upon her face,
She humbly knelt upon the ground,
And breathed her simple, loyal prayer,
Whilst that sweet face, when peace she found,
Like angel's, was transfigured there.

The great moon rose behind the hill ;
Its beams lit up the Christ's wan face :
The sleeping land for leagues lay still,
And no one sought that lonely place.
At last there came, with wavering tread,
Her bosom filled with vague alarms,
A woman fair, with grief-bowed head,
Her child of sin within her arms.

A *WAYSIDE CALVARY.*

Amidst her yearning, anguished prayer
The babe awoke with feeble wail ;
When lo ! throughout the moonlit air
Clear trilled a tuneful nightingale !
It seemed a voice from Paradise
That sang of her dark sin forgiven :
She rose with Hope throned in her eyes,
And in her heart sweet thoughts of Heaven !

Aye she Kaimed her Yellow Hair.

Aye she kaimed her yellow hair,
And aye she kaimed and kaimed,
Wi' waefu' dreams o' her fause love,
Whose name she never named.

She thocht how he had trysted her,
And kept his tryst fu' keen ;
Of how he took her trustfu' kiss,
Wi' love-licht in his e'en.

He hied him owre the briny sea,
And kind words spak he nane,
But left her a' the weird to dree,
And dree it a' her lane.

Aye she kaimed her yellow hair,
And aye she kaimed and kaimed,
Wi' waefu' thochts o' her fause love,
Whose name she never named.

Bird Song.

BLACKBIRD, O Blackbird,

What makes you sing sae clear?

"I sing, for aye my heart sings,

In springtime o' the year :

I sing to please my dearie,

At hame in yonder tree,

Within our nest sae cosie,

Sae dear to her and me."

Laverock, O Laverock,

What makes you sing sae sweet?

"I sing, for aye my heart sings,

In sunshine or in weat :

I sing to please my dearie,

At hame on yonder lea,

A heaven o' wings and daisies,

Sae dear to her and me."

'D SONG.

Ploughman, O Ploughman,
What makes you sing sae bold ?
“ I sing, for aye my heart sings,
In cloud or sun or cold :
I sing to please my dearie,
The flower o' yonder farm ;
Her lips are opening roses,
Her e'en a heavenly charm.”

Milkmaid, O Milkmaid,
What makes you lilt sae fine ?
“ I lilt, for aye my heart lilt,
In shadow or in shine :
I lilt to please my dearie,
The Ploughman brave and free ;
He lo'es me, and I lo'e him,
My guidman soon to be.”

Bobbie Cameron.

A WORKMAN o' the ancient days,
Honest Bobbie Cameron !
He ne'er was scant o' meat or claes,
Constant Bobbie Cameron ;
A brisk, auld, kindly-hearted chiel,
Though fiery as a flint and steel,
And whyles as thrawn's the vera deil,—
That was Bobbie Cameron.

His wife was bien, his house was braw,
Decent Bobbie Cameron ;
Nae snodder man in a' the raw
Than plain Bobbie Cameron ;
Yet often at his ain hearth-stane
He'd yaummer like a taupit wean,
And flyte, and ganch, and flyte again,
Fashious Bobbie Cameron.

BOBBIE CAMERON.

Clever Maggie kent him weel,
Kent her Bobbie Cameron,—
Kent his heart was true as steel,
Wi' a' his fashious yaummerin ;
And through the hoose her laughter rang
In cheery joke and canty sang :
Love's glamour ower his life she flang,
Merry Maggie Cameron.

Maggie had a souple tongue,
Dour was Bobbie Cameron ;
She'd thresh him wi't as wi' a rung,
Mantin' Bobbie Cameron.
Till, girnin' like a bear at bay,
" D-dammit, Maggie ! " he would say,
" D-dammit ! " But she won the day,
Canty Maggie Cameron.

Like ither folk when pay-nicht cam',
Sober Bobby Cameron
Would dauner ower to tak' his dram,
And crack wi' little stammerin' ;
And aye as liquor lows'd his tongue,
He blyther grew wi' auld and young,
And even, ance, a sang was sung
By thrawart Bobbie Cameron.

BOBBIE CAMERON.

At antrin times to toun would go
 Meg and Bobbie Cameron,
To spend the profits o' the "Co"
 On gear for Bobbie Cameron.
Yet a' the road they threepit in
Of what to buy in breeks or shoon,
Till, huff't, he'd swear by star and mune
 To part wi' Maggie Cameron.

And struttin' oot in front a bit,
 Sulky Bobbie Cameron
Gaed glunchin' in a gloomy fit,
 To fricht his Maggie Cameron,
Wha cam' sae cannily behin',
But brawly ken't he'd sune give in,
And hamewards come, wi' pleasant grin,
 A happy Bobbie Cameron.

Thou cranky, kindly, crouse auld Scot,
 Fair fa' thee, Bobbie Cameron!
Wha shirks his toil or fears his lot—
 It ne'er was Bobbie Cameron.
Nae honeyed words were his, I trow,
Yet might ye rake the country through,
Nor find a frien' mair tried and true
 Than honest Bobbie Cameron.

Bought Wit.

Oh, I was daft, an' meikle waur,
A-weel-a-wat, a-weel-a-wat,
Oh, I was daft, an' waur than daft,
When Bailie Blunt cam' here to woo.
To tell the truth sae witlessly,
An' ne'er his wily drift to see,
My silly sel' I'll ne'er forgi'e,
Sae lang's I wag the warld through.

He took me sleely by the hand,
The Bailie did, the Bailie did ;
He took me sleely by the hand,
Says, " Maggie, wha's yer lad ava ? "
Quoth I, my face wi' blushes het,
" Sin faither's death fient ane as yet
Has asked gin I wad be his pet,
Or hinted I've a mooth at a'."

BOUCHT WIT.

He hirsell'd slowly to my side,
Did Bailie Blunt, auld Bailie Blunt;
He hirsell'd slowly to my side,
Says, "Dawtie, can ye wash an' shew?"
"No, nane," says I, wi' dooncast face,
But thinkin' yet to aid my case,
I added swith, wi' artless grace,
"Fu' weel my mither can, I trew."

He slipp'd his arm around my waist,
Bauld Bailie Blunt, bauld Bailie Blunt;
He slipp'd his arm around my waist,
Says, "What's yer tocher, Miss Macraw?"
"My faither's gear, sin' ye maun ken,
Sae bequeath'd by legal pen,
Gin mither disna wed again,
The day she dee's I get it a'."

He humm'd an' haw'd, an' claw'd his lug,
The Bailie did, the Bailie did;
He humm'd an' haw'd, an' claw'd his lug,
An' "Send yer mither ben," quoth he.
I sent my mither ben bedeen;
It's unco hard to ken yer frien',—
The twa were wed a week yestreen,
An' I've been tell't to bark an' flee.

BOUCHT WIT.

Oh, I was daft, an' meikle waur,
 A-weel-a-wat, a-weel-a-wat,
Oh, I was daft, an' waur than daft,
 When Bailie Blunt cam' here to woo.
To tell the truth sae witlessly,
An' ne'er his wily drift to see,
My silly sel' I'll ne'er forgi'e,
 Sae lang's I wag the warld through.

Burns from Heaven.

WHa says that Robbie Burns is deid ?
Wha says he lies below the weed,
A pickle stoor, baith heart an' heid,
 This hunner year ?
Deil blast the loons, but they hae lee'd,
 For Robin's here !

Here whare the Cluden 'neath the mune
Gangs happin' to the same auld tune ;
Whare hoolets to the midnight win'
 Mak' eerie mane ;
Here whare I focht wi' sangs an' sin,
 In days lang gane.

For Heaven is guid, but Scotland's best !
Sae, when they gie the herps a rest
I tak a frien'ly, quiet request
 To Peter Doot ;
An' he, guid man, swears at the hest,—
 But lets me oot !

BURNS FROM HEAVEN.

Behint me clinks the gowden yett ;
An' faith ! the psalms I sune forget
As doon the road I skelp sherp-set
Past star and planet,
Wi' thochts o' hame that bizz red-het
Aneth my bannet !

An' when I stap oot ower the cluds,—
There's Scotland yet ! The birlin' fluds,
The broomy braes, the whusslin' wuds,
Gowans the same !
God ! but my heart starts aff in thuds
To ken I'm hame !

Saftly I daunder up an' doon
By Ayr an' Nith, by Enbrugh toon,
A licht-fit, liltin', hame-daft loon ;
Ilk stream, ilk tree,
The mavis' sang, the cushie's croon
Brings joy to me !

Yet Scotland's changed since first I kent it :
The gospel-faulds hae been augmentit ;
The hypocrites hae a' repentit,
An' quat their quirks ;
The auld black creeds hae been white-pentit
In a' the kirks.

BURNS FROM HEAVEN.

Nae mair frae poopits yerks a yell
Of God's damnation fierce an' fell ;
A saft an' couthie tale they tell,
An' tell it quick ;
They've sell't the guid auld brunstane Hell,
An' pensioned Nick !

A land o' saunts it would appear !
Stories o' Death their daily cheer ;
Whare ilk ane sits beside the Brier
Plantit by Ian ;
Where a' men drap the mild, saut tear
Beloved in Zion.

Nae lad plays pliskie wi' a lass ;
Nae fule taks hame a stotterin' glass ;
Nae stirk gangs furth a college ass—
Balaam's the mate o't ;
The Lord kens hoo it comes to pass,
But that's the gate o't.

An' as for Bards—they're scarce as brose !
But kailyaird gents, stript to the hose,
Keep dibble-dibblin' at the prose
For English stots ;
An' Lun'on toon pays through the nose,
In gowden groats !

POEMS FROM HEAVEN.

Guid faith! I ken na wha can fash
To read sic screeds o' auld wives' clash;
The teary-weary cantin' hash
 Is nocht but haivers;
An' yet the birkies, prood an' gash,
 Brag o' their claivers!

Leeze me on tales o' deils an' drink;
On canty sangs that jouk an' jink
Wi' rowth o' love, wi' rowth o' clink;
 But bards an' bottle,
Ballant an' sang hae taen a kink
 O' d—d teetotal!

As for mysel', I'm saunt or hog,
In this man's praise or that man's prog;
My very statues glower incog.,
 For jaw an' nose is
As like this common, rough phizog,
 As I'm like Moses!

The critic-craws still bigg their hame
'Mong Robin's fauts, on Robin's fame;
Ilk tag-rag rhyme that bears his name
 Is brocht their beak in;
An' a' his bits o' sin an' shame
 Gang to the theekin'.

BURNS FROM HEAVEN.

Deil roast sic craws an' a' their cawin' !
Their blame is stale, their praise is stawin' ;
When Robin drank he paid his lawin',—
 Sure that's weel kenned ;
When Robin fell he mourned the faain',—
 So there's an end !

Faith ! if the truth maun be confest,
Auld Scotland's guid, but Heaven is best
A body's frien's there stand the test
 Withouten sham ;
Guid fellows a' at crack the jest
 An' pass the dram.

Shakespere, the king o' a' the core ;
Byron, a deil to start a splore ;
Shelley, whase gowden liltis galore
 Keep a' herps waitin' ;
Coleridge, whiles seraph—whiles a bore,
 Like Milton's Latin !

But Scott's the wale o' men for me,
Wi' pawkie Allan at his knee,
An' gleg James Hogg, wha throws a wee
 At burly Kit ;
An' Louis,—blythe of late cam' he,
 A' shanks an' wit.

BURNS FROM HEAVEN.

Wi' siclike frien's Scots saunts come sair ;
Sae back to Scotland I'll nae mair,
For after Heaven I canna bear
 Sic godly folk ;
Then fareweel ! daylight's in the air,—
 An' there's the cock !

By the Grave Side.

DEAR Comrade ! As we stood around
His grave, and heard the dreary sound
Of harsh earth on the coffin-lid,
And mourned the genial presence hid
For evermore from human ken—
Kindliest among kindly men—
The land lay black 'neath winter's hand,
And life seemed hard to understand !

When, lo ! a robin, emblem right
Of his own spirit, brave and bright,
Flew to a naked bough o'erhead,
Close by the dreamless sleeper's bed,
And twittered forth a cheerful note !
The message, sure, was heaven sent !
A wave of sunshine seemed to float
O'er all the dull December-day,
And light up death's mysterious way
With gladness and divine content !

Cradle Song.

Hev, down dilly, doo,
Hey, down dan !
Weel were your mammy
Gin ye were a man !
You'll lead the shearers,
An' you'll haud the plough,
An' be like your daddy,
Aye kin'ly an' true.

Doun aff the Eildons
The snell win' blaws bauld—
Hap the wee feeties,
An' haud oot the cauld.
Winnocks are tirlin',
An' winter is here :
Steek its ain winnocks, noo,
Mammy is near.

CRADLE SONG.

Sheep on the mountains
Ahint the dykes cooer,
Plantin's are leafless,
An' dead ilka flooer.
But mammy's wee blossom
Lies cozy an' warm,
An' mickle she'll tine
Ere he come to harm !

Cauld blaws the nor' win'
An' deep drifts the snaw,
But bairnie's ain daddy
Will win hame through a'.
Steek the wee winnocks, noo,
Still the wee han' ;
O, weel were your mammy
Gin ye were a man.

You'll hae a hirsell—
A hunner an' mair ;
You'll ride a hie horse
To kirk an' to fair ;
You'll get a bride, too,
Sae comely an' braw,
An' bonnie wee bairnies
To jink through the ha'.

NADLE SONG.

Steek the wee winnocks, noo,
Mammy is near ye ;
Steek the wee winnocks, noo,
Naething shall fear ye.
Hey, down dilly, doo,
Hey, down dan !
Weel were your mammy
Gin ye were a man !

Edith.

O ! SHE was lovely, heart and form and face
 (How could she stoop from her great height to me),
And all my soul bowed low before the grace
 Of her pure majesty !

One night I slept, and then I seemed to wake,
 And saw her with a crown and silver wings ;
From her grand presence light appeared to break,
 And flow in golden strings !

Then she came forward and I felt her breath,
 My soul was filled with ecstasy of bliss ;
Her lips upon my brow were cold as Death,
 But oh ! how dear that kiss.

And then she vanished, but a glorious voice
 (Her voice it seemed, though changed yet strangely
 sweet)
Floated about me, " Mourn not, but rejoice,
 See that again we meet ! "

EDITH.

What time the vision came next day I knew,
God even then had snatched her to His home,
And yet in mercy as her spirit flew
Let her one moment come ;

Lest it should be that in a blind despair
I plunged into the depths of darkest sin ;
But the sweet hope left of that vision fair
Is "Heaven and her to win."

Good-night—and after.

JUST now we met in the hall alone,
Away from her aunt, the chaperon.
Her look was arch, and her cheek glowed bright,
As she bade me a mocking demure good-night.
I heard the Admiral's coming tread,
And—"Let us be cousins this once," I said.
She struggled, she laughed, her hair in a curl
Rolled down the back of the blushing girl.
The dew of her lip on my lip is wet ;
My arms seem full of their treasure yet.
What did I whisper? What was the light
That sprang to her eyes? Was I mad to-night?

Goodwin Sands.

Did you ever read or hear
How the Aid (God bless the Aid !—
More earnest prayer than that was never prayed)—
How the lifeboat, Aid of Ramsgate, saved the London
Fusilier ?

With a hundred souls on board,
With a hundred and a score,
She was fast on Goodwin Sands.

(May the Lord
Have pity on all hands—
Crew and captain—when a ship's on Goodwin Sands !)

In the smother and the roar
Of a very hell of waters—hard and fast—
She shook beneath the stroke
Of each billow as it broke,

GOODWIN SANDS.

And the clouds of spray were mingled with the clouds
of swirling smoke
As the blazing barrels bellowed in the blast !

And the women and the little ones were frozen dumb
with fear ;

And the strong men waited grimly for the last ;
When—as clocks were striking two in Ramsgate town—
The little Aid came down,
The Aid, the plucky Aid,—
The Aid flew down the gale,
With the glimmer of the moon upon her sail ;
And the people thronged to leeward ; stared and
prayed—

Prayed and stared with tearless eye and breathless
lip,

While the little boat drew near.

Ay, and then there rose a shout—
A clamour, half a sob and half a cheer—
As the boatman flung the lifeboat anchor out,
And the gallant Aid sheered in beneath the ship,
Beneath the shadow of the London Fusilier !

" We can carry, may be, thirty at a trip."

(Hurrah for Ramsgate town !)

" Quick, the women and the children !"

GOODWIN SANDS.

O'er the side

Two sailors, slung in bowlines, hung to help the women
down—

Poor women, shrinking back in their dismay
As they saw their ark of refuge, smothered up in
spray,

Ranging wildly this and that way in the rushing of the
tide ;

As they watched it rise and drop, with its crew of stalwart
men,

When a huge sea swung it upward to the bulwarks
of the ship,

And, sweeping by in thunder, sent it plunging down
again.

Still they shipped them — nine-and-twenty. (God be
blessed !)

When a man with glaring eyes
Rushed up frantic to the gangway with a cry choked
in his throat—

Thrust a bundle in a sailor's ready hands.

Honest Jack, *he* understands—

Why, a blanket for a woman in the boat !

" *Catch it, Bill !*"

And he flung it with a will ;

GOODWIN SANDS.

And the boatman turned and caught it, bless him!—
 caught it, though it slipped,
And as he caught it heard an infant's cries,
While a woman shrieked, and snatched it to her breast—
“My baby!”

 So the thirtieth passenger was shipped!

Twice, and thrice, and yet again
Flew the lifeboat down the gale
With the moonlight on her sail—
With the sunrise on her sail—
(God bless the lifeboat Aid and all her men!)
Brought her thirty at a trip
Through the hell of Goodwin waters as they raged
 around the ship,
Saved each soul aboard the London Fusilier!

If you live to be a hundred, you will ne'er—
You will ne'er in all your life,
Until you die, my dear,
Be nearer to your death by land or sea!

Was *she* there?
Who?—my wife?
Why, the baby in the blanket—that was she!

Gourock Bay.

(FROM THE CAFÉ AMERICAÎN, PARIS.)

THE moon that shines on Paris streets,
Shines too on Gourock Bay ;
From Paris streets, its glamour leads
My fancy far away !

The idle laugh, the noisy talk,
The crowd and all its folly,
The jest that makes the foolish glad,
The wise man melancholy,

The trees that in the gaslight gleam,
The garçon with his glasses.
The bocks, the mazagrans, the throng
That passes and repasses—

GOUROCK BAY.

Hey, presto ! they are gone, and now
In happy dreams I stray,
Where moon-tipped wavelets kiss the shore
Of placid Gourock Bay.

Unseen I watch my old friends' hearth,
I hear their pleasant voices,
Their mirth that's true, their laugh that's kind,
And oh ! my heart rejoices !

And one is there whose lightest word
Is music to mine ear ;
A holy rapture fills my soul,
For her dear form is near.

Her pure, sweet face looks into mine,
With happy smiles o'erspread :
Unseen, unheard, I gladly pray
God's blessing on her head !

"Il faut partir," my friend exclaims,
My dream is rudely shattered ;
The crowd keeps on its heedless course,
As if it nothing mattered.

GOUROCK BAY.

To them, perhaps, and yet adown
The Boulevards I stray,
A better man for my brief flight
To moonlit Gourock Bay.

Melena.

HAIR of auburn,
Peachen cheek,
Voice that tinkled silv'ry laughter ;
Lips of coral,
Eyes that speak
Big and glorious with Hereafter.

Merry footstep,
Pawkie way,
Tongue that owned the gift of healing ;
Heart that held
The tenderest sway,
Conquering by its kindly dealing.

Grown to girlhood,
Ripening years
Yield a beauty more than human ;
Summer blossoms,
Winter seres,
Girlhood opens into woman.

HELENA.

Spring was blowing
In the fens,
Lilies stirred beside the sedges ;
Sprites of sun
In sylvan dens
Heaped the leaves upon the hedges.

But a foot came
In with Spring's,—
Still a dread unwelcome comer,—
Brought our darling
Angel wings ;
But it saddened all our summer.

Her Secret.

I DID not dream that she had known
The name of love, the sting of pain,
So like a wild rose she had grown,
In distant sweetness safe from stain.

Is there a cave will hide a heart
Deep down that sorrow find it not?
This one lay sheltered, yet the smart
Of love, 'twould seem, had entrance wrought.

The smile on her dead lips that played
Was seal on secret safely kept,
Till waxen lids on closed eyes laid
Concealed that ever she had wept.

This is her secret, in my hand,
Her white heart's little blot of woe,
Some letters in a silken band,
Whose story none will ever know.

HER SECRET.

Or true, or false, she held them dear,
Dear as the love they once had meant ;
So dear, she whispered in my ear,
To burn them only when she—"went."

Take the sweet secret, trusty flame,
And hold it, as she held it, fast ;
Lap up the love, burn out the shame,
And spare her ribbon to the last.

Highland Music.

THE pipes, my lad ! You hear them ? far off among
the hills,—

Strains wild and sad ; too wild, perchance, for south-
ron ears like yours.

The Highland heart alone, mayhap, the Highland
music thrills ;

Mayhap the step it quickens must have trod the
purple moors.

But I have seen in Saxon eye the light of gladness
shine,

And I have seen the courage mount anew to Saxon
brow

When the pipes proclaimed the triumph of the Alma's
thin red line,

And the pibroch of Sir Colin crossed the leaguer at
Lucknow.

HIGHLAND MUSIC.

The clarion's brazen blast of yore bade Romans fight
for Rome ;

The bugles of Napoleon made the French lip proudly
smile :—

The strains of the far-streaming pipes fill Highland
hearts with home,

And one wild pibroch bears me back to weep in
green Glengyle.

Far through the world with wand'ring feet the mountain
children go,

And memories haply of their home fade in a foreign
land ;

But bid the tartan wave in sight, bid the wild Gathering
blow—

They tread once more Ben Lomond's side, Loch
Katrine's silver strand.

On drear Aboukir's desert-march, when Abercromby
led,

The Highland ranks were failing fast, grey vet'rans
sank to die,

Till "Cease me that Lochaber wail!" a Highland
chieftain said,

"Play Donuil Dhu!" The ranks refilled, the bode-
ful hour was bye.

HIGHLAND MUSIC.

Full of all memories, old and strange, tales pitiful and
glad,

To him of Highland blood are these weird pibrochs
and laments,

To stir the pulse, to make the blue eyes flash, the hot
heart mad,

To string strong nerves to action as men string great
instruments.

No strain is there among them all but strikes on hidden
fire

'Mid the legends of the clansmen—deeds gallant, gay,
or grave ;

The wild farewell of storied love, a chieftain's deed of
ire,

The chant that urged the fight, the last long dirge
above the brave.

The sun that sets to-night beyond the blue length of
Loch Voil,

The wild, sad wail of pipes Balquhider's woods but
now gave forth

Carry my thoughts to days of old, of warlike storm and
toil,

And bid me wait his last watch with the Ishmael of
the North.

HIGHLAND MUSIC.

Well had he held his own, the grey old chief, his eighty
years

Bought by his own keen blade, and now, despite the
outlaw's doom,

Stern lord yet of the Highland line, grim source of
Lowland fears,

His death was that of peaceful men in his own house
and room.

His eyes had looked their last upon the blue Loch
Voil below ;

No more his step would press the heath, no more his
slogan ring.

Henchmen and sons around his bed felt their hearts
sink to know

By the drawn lip, the fading cheek, that death was
hastening.

But hark ! a step, a voice beneath ! A foeman sought
to see

The dying chief. Lo ! life came back, eye kindled,
pale cheek warmed ;—

“Bring me my claymore, pistols, dirk. Throw my
plaid over me !

That never it be said a foe found Alpin's son un-
armed.”

HIGHLAND MUSIC.

A haughty interview and brief, death waiting at the
door.

The visitor dismissed, the old man smiled, his word
was said,

“Now let the piper play *Ha til mi*” (we return no more).

The pipes went wailing down the loch. The bold
Rob Roy was dead.

Home.

HERE is the shore, and the far wide world's before me,
And the sea says "Come," but I would not part from you,
Of gold nor fame would I take for the scent of larches
That hangs around you in the rain or dew,
Place of my clansmen, place of the old brave stories,
Good hearts, stout hearts, keen swords and their manly
glories.

Some will be singing their love for beauteous maidens,
The neck that is white like milk, and the deep dark eye,
Maids age and alter (my grief!) but love—my own place,
You show no difference as the years go bye.
If I were a roamer returning across the sea,
After long years you would still have the heart for me.

I have my friends on the heathy and myrtled hill-side,
In the crowded glens too, or skiffs so stout and bold,
Chasing the red deer far, or mounting the long wave,
Or (the sweet ones!) singing at dusk in the turfy fold.
They have not gear nor land maybe, nor the scholar's lore,
But sure there's the welcome for me at the poorest door!

HOME.

I might be namely, they say, and I might have fortune,
If I could but leave you a while and go away ;
But what was my gaining, an exile afar from Aora,
Where the fish in the brown linns plout, where the wild
 ducks play,
If the night crept deep and warm, and I astray,
Would my heart not yearn for the bird-pipe on the spray ?

'Tis ill to say it, for it's only a foolish softness,
But standing at morning alone on Dunchuach high,
To see all my dear place spread widely around and
 below me,
Brings the tear that stings to the loving and greedy eye ;
The glen and the corri, the ben and the sounding shore,
Have something that searches my heart to its deepest
 core.

Oh, here's a cup to my friends and my darling own place !
Glad am I that by fortune my mother she bore me here ;
It might have been far on the plains of the Saxon
 strangers,
With never a hill like Dunchuach or Duntcorvil near
And never a fir with its tassels to toss in the wind,
Salt Finne of the wave before and the woody Creag Dhu
 behind !

In a Church.

I SAT—in church, of course—and heard
The pastor thunder forth his sermon.
The text! you say—well that's absurd,
You ask me what I am not firm on.
But, *entre nous*, remember that,
For I am half afraid of libel;
My text was in the pew, where sat
Sweet Jenny, busy with her Bible.

Of course, you saw that charming girl—
Ah, but those eyes of hers were witching;
And then what lips; and, O, each curl—
No wonder that I thought of hitching.
Had I been with her in the pew
And touched her hand, without a falter
I should have risen full in view,
And thought I stood before the altar.

IN A CHURCH.

The sermon might be good or bad ;
 Good, I should say—I knew the preacher—
But really Jenny, though it's sad
 To say it, was my only teacher.
I looked into her soft brown eyes,
 And as I saw their gospels beaming,
I thought of far-off Paradise,
 And dreamt, and Eve was in my dreaming.

What meetings we had by the stile,
 When sunset made the earth a glory ;
The clasp of hands, the tender smile,
 The whisper, and the old, old story.
O love and youth and all the power
 That beats strong as a wave that's tidal ;
The golden ring, the orange flower,
 And all the passion of a bridal.

I saw myself a happy man,
 And rich, though owning scarce a penny ;
A home that love itself might plan,
 An angel in it—that was Jenny.
Around her all the air took light,
 She was, as Patmore sings divinely—
“The Angel in the House,” so bright,
 And ruling my affairs benignly.

IN A CHURCH.

Years came and went, and all the rest,
And though my hair was growing thinner,
I had that curve about the vest
Which spoke of the domestic dinner.
Gone, too, the ways that youth will range,
Ere manhood brings us to an anchor,
And in their place—no bad exchange—
A growing balance with my banker.

My lot was such from day to day,
That any little whiff of trouble
But came to make, when past away,
My simple, sober pleasures double.
I had—but here there came a flaw
That overset my fancy's cradle ;
I turned, and at my elbow saw
A douce Scotch elder with the ladle.

Gone was my dream that was so sweet ;
I felt just like that Eastern fellow
Who kicked his basket with his feet,
And lost what nearly turned him yellow.
Well, well, "we are such stuff," supply
The rest yourself—I took a penny,
And in the ladle with a sigh
Dropped it, and all my hopes of Jenny.

In a Churchyard.

MORE cause there is to love than dread
The calm deep silence of the dead :
They knew not when alive that they
Were fools of speech from day to day.
Now wordless, yet how wise they be,
Bound in one mute fraternity !

In a Tramway Car.

IN a city car my heart, one day,
Was thrilled in rather an envious way :
The horses were stopped, and with splendid fuss
A family party entered to us.
A winsome matron young and fair,
With rugs, and wraps, and travelling ware,
And two bonnie bairns in blue and white,
Fluffy with frills and laces bright.
And last, the lucky young lord of all,
Who stirred his dingy neighbour's gall,
For he smiled all round with a friendly nod,
And carried a bran-new fishing-rod.

The day was dull, and the sky was grey,
But this family party was bright and gay ;
Some kind of halo round them shone—
A sort of sunshine of their own.
It shone round the little matron fair,
In her yellow rug-straps and crinkly hair,

IN A TRAMWAY CAR.

In the children's faces of pure delight,
And the frills and pleats of blue and white,
And lit up the husband's smile so broad,
And the bright brass mounts of his fishing-rod.

The day was dull—and yet 'twould seem,
As I sat in the car I'd a pleasant dream—
A breezy landscape, a river bright,
Aglow with beauty and summer light,
A beechen grove by the river's brim,
The little matron, her children trim,
A picnic basket, snowy cloth—
And away by the river, beyond the trees,
With pipe in mouth and lazy ease,
A fisher reclines on the grassy sod,
And admires his beautiful fishing-rod.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife"—
Yet I couldn't help it for very life.
I was filled with the essence of covetousness,
For his wife and his bairns and all that was his—
For his hat of drab, and his jacket of grey,
His smiling content—his holiday—
And, oh! how my very soul was gnawed
By his beautiful bran-new fishing-rod.

In Memoriam.

J. H. STODDART, LL.D.,

Honorary President, Glasgow Ballad Club. Died 11th April 1888.

EARTH, take him to the quiet of thy breast,
And fold him in thy kindly April green—
This is the end of grief, the end of care !
Mourner,—thy lost one is no more unseen ;
Poet,—thou breathest a diviner air ;
Toiler,—thou art at rest !
The living are the losers. Fraud and wrong
And violence have one foe less to dread.
The world hath lost a good man's heart and head ;
And we, the singer of a gracious song.

Thou quaint old Lowland village, half asleep
Beneath "the golden beauty of thy trees,"
Long may thy rustic folk survive and keep
His name alive in Scottish memories—
His name and all by which it was endeared—
Keen insight, tolerance, pity for the weak,

IN MEMORIAM.

Humour with kindness blent,
Quick sympathy which strengthened while it cheered,
Courage to speak and wisdom what to speak,
And depths of sweet though hidden sentiment.

No brook, no lulled poetic ease he sought.
Amid the whirl of toil, the stress and strain
Of British life, he bore a manful part ;
And yet—true poet—held within his brain
Green gardens in the city's stony heart,
And wells of limpid thought !
No dreamer he ! With broad and modest mind
Great power he wielded wisely, toiled for men,
Wrote never syllable that shamed his pen,
Nor gave to party what he owed mankind !

He left us, hoping that he still might live
To shape some epic song with ripened powers.
The larger life he hath attained may give
His dream a larger utterance than ours !
There, with the mighty builders of old rhyme,
He breathes diviner air ; he is at rest ;
He sees with eyes serene
The solvèd mysteries of death and time.—
Earth, take him gently to thy quiet breast,
And fold him kindly in thine April green !

In Sicily.

"What manner of magic hath this poetry that, while nations are disintegrated and kingdoms effaced, while the names of dynasties are forgotten ; yea, while religions change and the very languages of men die out, the fair Nausicaa, ever young and ever lovely, doth still play at the ball through the long eventful ages ?"—*The Afterglow*.

SOMEWHERE between th' enchanted sea
And snow-capped peaks in Sicily.

A breezy vineyard, all aglow
With fire-red clusters, row on row ;
A wall of turf about the ground,
And on the green wall, sitting there,
A little lad is taking care,
But sees not, slyly skulking round,
Two foxes which, with furtive joy,
Watch both the vineyard and the boy.
One with a furry footstep goes
Stealing along the drooping rows ;

IN SICILY.

With sniffing nose and watering lip,
The other eyes the urchin's scrip,
And vows she will not leave him there
Other than breakfastless and bare.
But heedless of what ill awaits,
The lad sits on the wall and plaits
With rush and stalk of asphodel
A locust cage. Less care has he
Of scrip or vines, of work or fee,
Than joy in what he plaits so well.

What glamorous golden sunshine glows
Along the vineyard's glittering rows?
What charm of what old wizard's wand
Rings this green plot of truant's land?
Is this a dream, or can it be
Time is annulled in Sicily?
For lo! the sun stops; autumn stays;
No breeze blows; not a cloudlet strays;
The urchin sits from age to age,
Plaiting his pretty locust cage
Upon the turfy wall's green top.
None of the reddened clusters drop,
No fresh leaf wilts; one fox still goes
Skulking along th' ambrosial rows,

IN SICILY.

And one with ever-watering lip
Watches the yet unstolen scrip.
Age follows age, but none estrange ;
 The vines still glow, the fox yet waits ;
 The lad—a lad for ever—plaits,
 Immortal in a world of change.

A world of change ! For while he plaits,
Heedless of foxes and of Fates,
Throned heavens of gods, broad realms of men
Are ruined and built up again.
Like cloudflakes touched with rose and gold,
 The radiant goddesses of Greece
 Flash through their sunset and surcease ;
And Lucian's gods are bought and sold—
Vain, hollow gods, the scorn of man ;
The great grave gods of Julian
 Sweep from the world with angry frown ;
 Then from a reeking cross looks down
The Man-God's sad and thorn-crowned face ;
Last, from the outer gloom of space,
The horror of a God Unknown
Chills the tired human heart to stone.

Throned heavens of gods, broad realms of men
Are ruined and built up again !

IN SICILY.

Behold the Macedonian bow
Beside the Roman chariot-wheels—
Greece is a Roman province now !
Lo, where the top of Carthage reels
In Roman flame !—Rome holds in fee
Afric from oasis to sea.
O Antony, those witching lips
That laughed to wreck thy hundred ships,
Twitch as the deadly aspic stings,
Yet mock the Roman triumph—Vain !
For Rome leads in her fettered train
The dog and ibis-headed Kings—
Strange pageants of a mystic land !
And Rome ! Time turns his glass ; the sand
Runs deserts ; Rome has ceased to be ;
The mighty race hath perished—yea,
As at the red decline of day
The clamours of the rookery
Pass, growing fainter down the sky—
So doth the very language die !

Throned heavens of gods, broad realms of men
Are ruined and built up again.
O'er chartless wastes the rash sail flies ;
Great nameless constellations rise
In beautiful undreamed-of skies,

v SICILY.

And a new world in unknown seas
Outfables the Hesperides.

Through the long ages new and strange,
Heedless of foxes and of Fates,
The lad—a lad for ever—plaits,
Immortal in a world of change.
Immortal! History sits and dreams
Her tragi-comedy. She knows
This lad beside the glittering rows,
And marvels how the charm of song
Hath stayed the common doom so long—
For one Theocritus, it seems,
Beheld and sketched this urchin so
Twenty-two hundred years ago!

In the Avenue.

Too big a world for folk so small,
Where beech-trees grow so very tall,
And tiny footsteps faintly fall

On endless road :

Quaint little dames in cloak and hood,
Ruffled a bit by breezes rude,
But both in that confiding mood

When minds unload.

Breathless Dora, speaking for two,
Taking three steps where one would do,
Lets her little heart run through

Her lips like sand ;

While gentle Eva's golden hair
Waves over castles in the air
That autumn winds must touch with care,
If they're to stand.

IN THE AVENUE.

And may they stand, these castles tall,
With friendly front and open hall,
Though many stouter structures fall,

Or slow decay :

God send His masons to repair

The pretty castles in the air

We built when all the world was fair,

That's now grown grey.

In the Spring-time.

(LOOKING BEFORE AND AFTER.)

SEASON of sweetness and of joy,
The same as when an artless boy
 I strayed by bush and thorn,
And watched the lark amid the light,
And saw with a supreme delight
 The early wheat and corn.

The same as when the rainbow spanned
The town, the bay, the mountainland
 Where was my boyhood's home ;
When glistening cloud and depth of blue,
And bee and bird and flower anew
 Proclaimed that Spring had come.

The same, yet not the same ! for now
The hours with mystic touch endow

IN THE SPRING-TIME.

Most sights in earth and sky
With meanings that affect the heart,
So that the tear will often start
To the still, musing eye.

In earliest prime my heart beat high
The while the summer clouds went by,
Trailing their shadows o'er
The beauteous scene which at my feet
Soft checkered lay. O fair and sweet
That winding, wooded shore.

And fancy showed me day by day
Her changing pictures, fresh and gay
With morn's rich pomps of light :
I dreamt of lands remote and fair,
Where reigned perpetual calm, and air
Aye odorous, even bright.

I dreamt of ancient worth and power,
Of kingly men, of men the flower,
Of the old knightly fame
I dreamt, till grew the daring thought,
Which hope soon loved and fondly taught,
I too might win a name.

IN THE SPRING-TIME.

But other forms now fill the soul,
And other visions now control
 Purpose and highest aim :
Mine eye has learned it may not see
But little,—much is mystery,
 And all a passing name.

Dreams that like golden butterflies
Glittered before my boyish eyes,
 Glittered and passed—are gone :
The ideals of my earlier years
Gone too, and gone midst burning tears,
 The dearest dashed and strewn.

What though? Those fair imaginings,
Those witching forms of men and things
 Which held my youth in fee,
Were only chrysalis shapes, which time
Touches to rend, ere manhood's prime,
 With wise severity.

I would not be a child again,
Swayed by each passing joy and pain,
 Wild wonder in its eyes ;
I long to know—I long to buy
The thing for which my life doth cry—
 The wisdom of the wise.

THE SPRING-TIME.

To know what is, and not what seems,
Realities, not fears nor dreams,
 Whate'er their name or birth ;
To know the fruitage of the years
Without illusion—if rush tears
 And loss of easy mirth.

I would not rest me in the plain,
Content to linger in the lane
 Beside my father's door,
And lift no eyes of passionate gaze
Beyond the circling hills, and ways
 That dip adown the moor.

As the great-hearted Genoese,
Spite taunt and scoff of those at ease
 In palace, mart, and cell,
Dared all to find his priceless quest,
The inviolate secret of the West,
 And broke the coward's spell :

So bear thee, eager seeking soul,
Touching the half-seen, half-hid goal
 Of our humanity :
Forth in sweet trust like April flowers,
Forth fearlessly and use thy powers,
 Forth in large liberty.

IN THE SPRING-TIME.

Draw from the seasons as they wheel
Continuous growth, and let thy zeal

In this know no decay :
Each spring shall fetch thee from afar
Fresh favours, nursed by sun and star,
Dewdrop and heavenly ray ;

And most that mood, the foe of Pride
(That mood which proves that Pride has died),

Deep childlike humbleness :
The one best gift to all who yearn
To know what is, and wisely learn
Their own poor littleness.

Be mine while primrose decks the mead,
While skylark warbles high o'erhead

In the bright April day,
To feel unchanged the thrill of joy
They gave me when an artless boy,
More than did romp or fray.

Be mine of simple joys like these
Which nerve and stay, as well as please,

To drink with daily zest :
Beauty, which cloy not, then shall wait
With song and gladness at my gate,
God's peace my constant guest.

Irene.

(ÆTAT. 13.)

AMONG the purple mountain-folds I sought
And sought, in vain, for peace. I sought in vain
In dreamy woods ; along th' enchanted main ;
In kindly hamlets. Then with books I wrought,
Seeking for peace in toil, which only brought
Dull discontent and weariness of brain.
"Where art thou, Peace?" I cried: "Oh, soothe
this pain
Of tearful longing and of throbbing thought!"
A sweet voice answered. Laughter glad and clear
Set the birds singing. Beautiful bright eyes
Made a new dawn. A sweet voice answered:
"Cease
From further fruitless searching. I am here—
In flower of flesh and blood, of perfect size,
Quite loving—Your Irene! I am PEACE!"

IRENE.

Peace, with her chatter and infectious glee ;

Peace, swinging mad-cap on a springy bough,

With bright hair blown and tumbled anyhow ;

Peace, paddling in a shoal of summer sea ;

Peace, at high revel up an apple-tree ;

Peace, reading with a bent and dreamy brow ;

Peace, on a footstool—very peaceful now—

Listening with hands clasped fondly on my knee !

No abstract noun, no mythic shape divine,

No sweet elusive dream of who knows what,

But just a child, she brings my heart surcease

Of care ; and, when she puts her cheek to mine

Bliss, and complete contentment with my lot.

Yes, this is my Irene—this is PEACE.

Jamie—A Lament.

Now a' the howffs are dull as Death,
Nae mair the laugh gangs roun';
Deserted, gloomy, silent baith
The Crosskeys and the Croon.
O wha like him could Care beguile,
King o' companions boon;
There's been a tear in every smile
Since Jamie sobered doon.

O Jamie was the throotherest chiel,
The terror o' the toon,
Jamie was the wildest deil
For miles and miles aroun';
But now he gangs anither gate
And sings anither tune;
There's been nae devilment o' late
Since Jamie's sobered doon.

JAMIE—A LAMENT.

Sair, sair his cronies rue the day
There cam' into the toon
A lassie wi' a winsome way,
And hair a bonnie broon :
Now a' the blades behave their best,
At nicht there's no a soun' ;
She's conquered Jamie wi' the rest,
And Jamie's sobered doon.

He haunts her and he canna rest,
He's fa'n in love, the loon !
And every day he wears his best,
Fair crackit i' the croon.
What can the warld be comin' to ?
He trembles if she froon ;
There's naething left love canna do,
Since Jamie's sobered doon.

To think o' sic a steerin' lad
Tied to a hizzy's goon !
O dolefu' was the day the jad
Set foot within the toon.
We're a' in-owre before the Bell,
In-owre and sleepin' soun' ;
I'm thinkin' o' a wife mysel'
Since Jamie's sobered doon.

Jean.

A SHINING house, a cheery hearth,
A liltin' laughin' heart had Jean,
But, auld an' dour, her nameless worth
Seemed naething in her faither's e'en.

He dozed and grunted owre the fire,
Took comforts as by richt his ain,
Would flyte on Jean, and spirt his ire
On trifles like a tawpit wean.

"Our Jean maks kail as nane can mak,"
So Will himsel' would whyles declare ;
And wha would baker's kickshaws tak,
When Jeanie's scones an' cakes were there ?

And yet he growled like dog at bane—
She scoured owre muckle, washed owre weel ;
"Lod, lassie, let thae claes alane,—
I'd rather bide as black's the deil."

JEAN.

But Jeanie was a lass o' sense,
Paid never heed to grumphs an' groans ;
She'd seen thro' a' his fine pretence,
An' lauch'd the mair when loud his moans.

The wauket loof the tawse can staun',
The cheery heart lets sunlight in ;
Jean was as happy as the dawn,
As merry as a mountain linn.

An' love cam' in wi' lads a score,
Gat honest welcome blythe and free :
Still the auld watch-dog at the door
Wi' girnin' made a-mony flee.

Till Robin, licht o' heart an' spruce,
Wi' crack for her an' crack for him,
Sent Jeanie singing thro' the hoose,
An' won the faither's friendship grim.

Will thawed, like Tinto's snaws, but slow,—
He feared his growin' love for Jean ;
He felt its great deeps overflow,
And shuddered when the fount was seen.

JEAN.

It cam' at last,—his words were few :
When Robin pressed in lover's style,
He rose an' luiked the window thro',
An' seemed to scan the heavens awhile.

“The lassie's clever, tho' she's mine,
An' you'll be guid to her, ye say ;
She'll miss her faither, sune or syne,—
Ay, Robin, it'll rain the day !”

.

Nae mair was said, but blythe was Jean,
An' Robin, prood he weel micht be ;
A crooser auld man ne'er was seen
Than Willie at the weddin' spree.

Jenny.

BORN with the violets
Dew'd in the dawn,
She, like the violets,
Early has gone.
What can we say of her?
Sunshine and tear
Filled the brief day of her
Stay with us here.

Jenny with her dolls
(Names for every one),
Half in childish earnest,
Half in childish fun ;
Telling precious secrets
Known to her alone,
Questioning and answering
Answers all her own.

ENNY.

Talking like a matron
To a restive child,—
Talk, that with its quaintness
Older folks beguiled
From their wiser trifling
To bestow a thought
On the tiny dramas
By childish fancy wrought.

Happiness dwells in the heart of a child :
Sunshine is ever the light of their eyes :
Tears are, with them, but the sun-shower mild
To freshen the earth, and brighten the skies.

Flowers in the garden, flowers in the wood,
Ever to Jenny were comrades at play ;
Rain would awaken her thoughtfuller mood,
But, when the sun came,—out and away !

Splashing the pebbles in pools by the sea,
Climbing the hill among foxgloves tall,
Chasing the butterfly, chased by the bee,
Everything new, and delighted with all !

JENNY.

This is the life that a child should live,
This is a joy it is joy to see,
This is the purest that life can give,
In the mirth of a child a child to be.

Jenny's gone to school to-day,—
School to her is merely play ;
Everything that passes there
Jenny watches, home to bear
Traveller's tales of wonders rare
She had seen at school.

What she learns from day to day,
She repeats to Meg in play ;
Meg and Joe her scholars are—
More are made of stool and chair :
So, with pedagogic air,
Jenny teaches school.

Jenny's taken ill ;
Surely not to die ?
Surely care and skill
Danger will defy ?
It is past—she will recover—
She is singing as before ;
Glad we are that it is over ;
Death was very near the door.

ENNY.

'Twas truly said
Death to the door was brought,
Nearer than we had thought,—
Jenny is dead !

And what is left ? A marble face,
With eyelids closed and lips withdrawn,
Within whose chiselled lines we trace
Resemblances before unknown ;
The final look that still we crave,
Though still it dulls the heart with pain :
This for a day—and then the grave
Will open—and will close again.

What still is left ? The springs of tears
In childish book, in childish toy ;
The bitter thought of brighter years,
And treasured hopes and dreams of joy ;
And silent, mournful evening hours
That with the voiceless dead we pass ;
This for a time—and then the flowers
Will bloom among the churchyard grass.

Is nothing left ? Nay, say not so !
Too close around our hearts she grew ;
And many an older life will know
Far fewer friends than Jenny knew ;

JENNY.

And all who loved her thoughtful ways
The sudden parting touched with pain :
We measure lives by more than days,
And hers has not been lived in vain.

The scented violet
Uprooted lies ;
It breathes its sweetest out
Before it dies.
The perfume lingers
When the flower is sere :
The world is richer
That it blossomed here.

John o' Lorn.

My plaid is on my shoulder and my boat is on the
shore,

And it's all bye wi' auld days and you ;
Here's a health and here's a heartbreak, for its hame,
my dear, no more,
To the green glens, the fine glens we knew !

'Twas for the sake o' glory, but oh ! wae upon the wars,
That brought my father's son to sic a day ;
I'd rather be a craven wi' nor fame nor name nor scars,
Than turn an exile's heel on Moidart Bay.

And you, in the day-time, you'll be here, and in the mirk,
Wi' the kind heart, the open hand and free ;
And far awa' in foreign France, in town or camp or
kirk,
I'll be wondering if you keep a thought for me.

JOHN O' LORN.

But nevermore the heather nor the bracken at my knees,
I'm poor John o' Lorn, a broken man ;
For an auld Hielan' story I must sail the swinging seas,
A chief without a castle or a clan.

My plaid is on my shoulder and my boat is on the
shore,
And it's all bye wi' auld days and you :
Here's a health and here's a heartbreak, for its hame,
my dear, no more,
To the green glens, the fine glens we knew !

John Veitch, LL.D.

Obit Sept. 3, 1894.

A STERN and well-marked face, a face of power,
That hid a kindly and a loving heart
For man and beast ; he hated tricks of art ;
His love of Tweed and Yarrow was a dower
That brought to him full many a happy hour !
The border ballads were to him a part
Of his own being, and he loved to start
For border scenes, careless of storm and shower !
Philosophy and Poetry were blent
In his rich nature ; he loathed all things base ;
Things good and fair in accents eloquent
He praised, a glow upon his rugged face.
Old landmarks pass ! In grief our heads are bent,
Gazing in silence at his vacant place.

Langsyne, when Life was Bonnie.

Langsyne, when life was bonnie,
An' a' the skies were blue,
When ilka thocht took blossom,
An' hung its head wi' dew,
When winter wasna winter,
Though snaws cam' happin' doun ;
Langsyne, when life was bonnie,
Spring gaed a twalmonth roun'.

Langsyne, when life was bonnie,
An' a' the days were lang ;
When through them ran the music
That comes to us in sang ;
We never wearied liltin'
The auld love-laden tune ;
Langsyne, when life was bonnie,
Love gaed a twalmonth roun'.

ANGSYNE, WHEN LIFE WAS BONNIE.

Langsyne, when life was bonnie,
An' a' the warld was fair,
The leaves were green wi' simmer,
For autumn wasna there.
But listen hoo they rustle,
Wi' an eerie, weary soun',
For noo, alas, 'tis winter
That gangs a twalmonth roun'.

Law Lyric.

THE CROFTER'S TILED HOUSE.

A CROFTER ae day gaed to law wi' his laird
About the bit hoose he had built on his yaird ;
And that he wad win, the puir body ne'er dooted ;—
But wait till you hear how the law gaed about it !

His lease seemed to say to his eyesight unskilled,
He'd get compensation for what he might build ;
And when it ran oot, without doubt or excuse,
He asked to be paid for the worth o' his hoose.

"Na, na !" said the laird, "in the lease it is stated
The hoose I'm to pay for is *stane, lime, and slated* ;
The hoose on my land, that your ain hands hae piled,
Is not stane and slated, but *stane, clay, and tiled*.

LAW LYRIC.

"You say that it cost ye a hunner odd pounds !
I claim every stick, stane, and tile on the grounds ;
And though it is worth forty pounds, I admit,
It's mine, free o' cost, on the day that ye flit."

"Hoot ! toot !" said the crofter, "My Lord ! ye forget
Ye're getting for naething ilk fence, dyke, and yett ;
And as for the hoose, it precisely is builded
Frae plans, and sic stuff as your deid factor willed it.

"Ye've valued the hoose, and, by chissel and mell !
You tell me the thing is worth forty yoursel' !
Ye canna intend sae to rob me for flittin' ?"
"Deed, aye !" said the laird ; "in the lease it's sae
written."

Now, wha could expect folk to cringe like a moose
And see a rich laird thus play grab at his hoose ?
Syne, quickly the crofter brocht in a law case,
And said the laird's quirk was an unco disgrace.

The judges wha tried it, and should hae kent better,
Forgetting the speerit, dealt oot the black letter,
Declairing the laird, they were sorry to say,
Must get the man's hoose, and wi' nothing to pay.

LAW LYRIC.

Our worthy Scotch judges, between man and man,
Sit dealing oot book-law as fast as they can ;
But men aff the bench whiles a difference can draw
'Tween dealing oot *justice* and dealing oot *law*.

Leaf and Shadow.

WHERE shallow waters, clear and brown,
Glide under blossom, over gravel,
I see a dead leaf floating down ;
Beneath, I see its shadow travel.

The dead leaf drifts—a senseless thing ;
But up and down, o'er ridge and hollow,
The shadow like a living wing
Now seems to fly, now seems to follow.

They fleet and vanish. Even so,
Far down across our little planet,
Must cloud and shadow seem to go
When high in heaven angels scan it.

Left alone.

'Tis just like a belt of the moorland
That borders the side of the sea,
With patches of corn and potatoes,
With stretches of ryegrass and lea,
With patches of broom and of bramble,
Of hawthorn, and hazel tree.

The quaintest and queerest old houses,
All lie within sound of the shore,
Their bracken-thatched roofs in the sunlight
With wild-flowers and grasses grown o'er,
With ivy and lichen-grown gables,
And crooked, each window and door.

The quaintest and queerest old houses,
Rough raftered, and mystic within,
Where the fire glimmers low on the hearth-stone,
And light through the smoke struggles in,
One sits, with her life-laden visage,
Alone, but to dream and to spin.

EFT ALONE.

Alone in that mystical region
Once cheery with prattle and song,
Once bright with the sweetness of faces,
Once rich with the healthy and strong,
Alone ; at her wheel in that dreamland,
She spinneth, the weary day long.

Whirr ! goes the wheel in its motion,
And restless the past in her brain,
The joys, and the loves, and the sadness,
And the coils of grief and of pain,
That are spun, with the thread a-spinning
Life's journeyings over again.

The sun flickers in at the window
And dances bright over the floor ;
The bee, with the breath of the moorland,
Comes in at the open door ;
She sings to the dance of her children,
Till the bobbin with thread runs o'er.

Round her house, by the ivy gable,
She can see the boats in the bay,
Fishermen's boats, with their bark'd-brown sails
Wind-full sail, sail gaily away ;
Then a blinding mist comes o'er her eyes
With sad thoughts of another day,

LEFT ALONE.

Whirr ! goes the wheel in its motion,
And on with the thread as it runs,
A bark, wind-tossed on an angry sea,
With a father and three brave sons,
On till the flight of her vision ends
In a shriek, which her being stuns.

These quaintest and queerest old houses,
With wild-flowers and grasses grown o'er,
Are havens of hardy fishermen
Who live by the western shore,—
Fishermen's crofts, with their quaint old homes,
That were built in the days of yore.

And she who sits wearily spinning
Her thoughts of the past with the thread,
Suffers the lot that fishermen's wives
And that fishermen's mothers dread,—
Left alone, in a wearisome world,
But to work for her daily bread.

Light and Shade.

SHINE and shower, shower and shine,
 Alternate rule the April day,
Cloudlets blown about the blue,
Sun-glints ever glancing thro'—
Shine and shower, shower and shine,
 Thro' life's changing skies away.
Domed with joy no life remains
Free from sorrow-clouds and rains,
All must own the law divine,
Each must share the shower and shine.

They come and go, they go and come,
 Sharp and sudden, rain and sun,
Heaven a moment hid, and then
Clear-revealing light again—
They go and come, they come and go,
 Light and shade till life is done.
Change is lord of all our lots,
Shifting still the sunniest spots,
Leaving none with lasting woe—
The sun shall come, the shade must go.

Elg.

COME into the garden with me, Lily, love,
Where the flower starnies modestly shine ;
The secret I'll whisper to thee, Lily, love,
Must be known to no bosom but thine.

Nay, say not the linnet will hear, Lily, love,
Nor blush though the moss-rose may see ;
The rose-tongue thou mayest not fear, Lily, love,
And birds love as fondly as we.

Thy voice is more pleasing by far, Lily, love,
Than bird-songs of tenderest tone ;
No soft eye from pansy to star, Lily, love,
Has such richness and depth as thine own.

Yea, chide me and blush as thou wilt, Lily, love,
Thy words purl as sweet as the rill ;
If truth drives thy silence away, Lily, love,
It makes thee more beautiful still.

LILY.

Then come to the garden with me, Lily, love,
While the west is o'erflowing with wine ;
The secret I'll whisper to thee, Lily, love,
Shall be known to no bosom but thine.

My Garden.

O, WIND that blows from the sunny south,
Come into my garden prepared for you,
And kiss the buds with your balmy mouth
Till they thrill and blush through the gleaming dew.

The swallow has come to the reedy moat ;
The sparrow looks out from the belfry cone ;
The blackbird is tuning his liquid throat,
To hail thy coming with choicest tone.

Search out the blossoms, ye hungry bees,
The air is sad with your eager hum,—
There is wealthy fare on the apple trees,
But the store is sealed till the south wind come.

O, tender butterfly come not yet—
No pansy-kindred are here to woo,
The sun of the crocus has barely set—
'Tis weary waiting when love is true.

MY GARDEN.

The knotted buds on the pear-trees shine ;
The lily gleams through her sheath of snow ;
The primrose droops and the cowslips pine,
For they will not burst till the south wind blow.

My Grandmother's Picture.

I **KNEW** her when those curls were grey,
That buxom form grown vast,
When rude irreverence might say
Her "day of grace" was past :
But still her eyes were bright and brave,
Her smile was still the same ;
Her spirit, cresting Time's rude wave,
Made Age an empty name.

I know not what the men might be
When she was young and fair,
But that the maids were good to see
Rich proof is hanging there :
I fear me much that had my lot
On these old times been thrown,
My heart had not so stoutly fought
For leave to live alone.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S PICTURE.

I do not like the present style
Of maidens and their ways ;
The modern girl's composed of smile,
Of bustle, hoop, and stays.
She's pinched in here, and puffed out there,
"Cribbed, cabined, and confined,"
Till there is neither space nor air
For heart, or soul, or mind.

But when my ancestress was young,
Maids were more wise, less fine,
And from their healthy habits sprung
Grandmothers like to mine :
Bright eyes, red cheeks, and figures plump,
No nerves and little lore,
Feet that could walk, and run, and jump—
What could man wish for more ?

A little heart, you say ? Well, that
Was never lacking then :
No lily fair begat their love,
They kept it all for men.
It was a healthy, happy love
That had no higher life,
Nor any thoughts that soared above
The duties of a wife.

MY GRANDMOTHER'S PICTURE.

In those fine days a strapping lad
Might woo with empty purse ;
Decrepit nabobs trouble had
To find a pretty nurse.—
I think if I had living been
When she was young and free,
There would have been a match between
My grandmama and me.

My Love.

You've seen the summer mornin', lads,
Come lauchin' ower the lea,
An' lichtin' up the blabs o' dew
In ilk wee gowan's ee ;
But wad ye see a purer licht
Than gems the dewy green,
Gang ower an' see the licht that lies
In my love's een.

There's nae love like my love,
Nae love ava ;
There's nae love like my love,
Near nor far awa'.

The fragrance o' the buddin' rose
That scents the summer air,
An' draws the bee frae muir an' lea,
Wad maist defy compare ;

MY LOVE.

Yet sweeter sweets than scent the gale,
Or bee frae blossom sips,
Are mine at e'en in yonder glen,
Frae my love's lips.

The mavis sings a sang at e'en
Gars a' the woodlan's ring,
An' thrills a chord o' tender love
Through ilka livin' thing ;
But rich an' rare as are the sangs
The woods an' glens rejoice,
They're no' sae tender, rich, an' sweet
As my love's voice.

An' though her een are baith sae bricht,
Her lips sae sweet to pree,
An' though her voice is ever tuned
To sweetest melodie ;
A joy there's yet that's mair than a',
An' lends to each a pairt—
The boundless wealth o' love an' truth
In my love's heart.

My Morning Muse.

ALL-BEAUTIFUL One, whom man hath never seen,
Save by the inner vision of the mind,
Didst thou appear to us in mortal mien
Thy loveliness would strike our weak eyes blind !
 Wild, visionary visitor, divine,
 Who dowered thee with the glory that is thine ?

Thou comest from afar to this bleak earth,
And sunshine streameth from thee on thy way ;
Where'er thou wanderest beauty taketh birth,
Thy presence changes night to gladsome day.
 Thy dazzling glance upon our spirit beams
 To waken wingèd thoughts and living dreams.

In youth's fair morning thou didst come to me,
An eager leader of rich-hearted boys ;
I saw thee beckon, and I followed thee,
To find in solitude serener joys :
 Then nature dawned on my astonished sight,
 A sweet embodiment and new delight.

MY MORNING MUSE.

M

A passion troubled me for all her forms,
Sunset and morning, noon and solemn night,
The yearning winds, the mad rebellious storms,
Crushing the forests in their conquering might,
Or scourging into furious mood the main,
To fume against his rocky bars in vain.

Visions of beauty haunted me for ever,
And I became of nature a loved child ;
A joy it was to linger by the river,
And by its voice for hours to be beguiled :
Oh, I have heard its murmur till it came
From unseen, shadowy realms that have no name.

With thee I've wandered lone in ancient places,
Among historic ruins of past days,
And in their wrinkles could out-trace time's traces,
Eyeing with wonderment the pranks he plays :
In crumbled abbeys I've held strange commune,
When the grim walls were glimmering 'neath the moon.

Thou taught me first the truth in woman's eyes,
And oped the portal of love's realm to me,
Wherein I wandered under sinless skies,
Wherein the spirits of the blest might be,—
The mystic land of morn that knows no day,
Where blighting winds come not to breathe decay !

MY MORNING MUSE.

Thou didst not leave me in the after days
When 'twas my lot the city streets to tread,
But showed me man and all his mimic ways,
His mighty works that last when he is dead !
And to mine eyes anointed all did seem
The strange outworking of a wondrous dream.

I saw men struggling on the bridge of Time,
That stretches 'twixt the two eternities—
Lorn, witless strangers in an unknown clime,
With hope and terror trembling in their eyes,
Till each sank into darkness one by one,
And knew no more the radiance of the sun !

I cannot speak the love I had for thee,
Nor the delight which to my soul thou'st given—
Dearer to me than saint's eternity !
For where we met, that was my brightest heaven.
Why hast thou fled me now ? mine eyes are weary
Waiting thy smile, without which all is dreary.

Is it that I have herded with base clay,
And held the music which thou gav'st me cheap ?
Or is it that I've owned false pleasure's sway,
And felt her potions through my pulses creep ?
Or groped old Mammon's way with petty souls
Who grub for dross like blind untiring moles ?

MY MORNING MUSE.

Come back, come back, my days are desolate !
Though Time did strew his treasures at my feet,
Though I sate honoured in high estate,
Though beauty smothered me with kisses sweet—
Still would my spirit hunger : wanting thee,
The richest gifts are poorest poverty.

Narcissus.

THIS white-leaved flower with heart of gold
Delighted Homer long ago ;
Yet Nature thinks it not so old
But that it still with grace may grow.
And if the flower may bloom anew,
Why not the flower's old legend too ?

There was a fountain pure as glass,
And round it there were flowers and grass,
And tall trees kept it cool and clear,
And no wild beast or bird came near ;
And never leaf or blossom fell
Upon that bright and wondrous well.

Here many and many a summer day
Narcissus came, and as he lay
Among the soft and flowery grass,
He gazed and saw as in a glass

NARCISSUS.

A beautiful gold-clustered head—
A sweet young face of white and red,
Which, when he smiled, smiled back, and when
He fell a-weeping wept again.
Often he leaned, and sought to kiss
The fair mouth lifted up to his ;
And often tried to clasp and draw
To him the lovely shape he saw.

Here lingering many a summer day,
He drooped and slowly pined away,
And died of grief. When he was dead,
“His self-love killed him,” people said ;
“That pretty face of his, ’tis plain,
Brought him but little good or gain !”

Alas, how easily both good
And evil are misunderstood !
That which is best in us men blame ;
They praise—and flush our cheeks with shame !
O World, will no experience teach
Thy babbling tongue more prudent speech ?

In that clear spring among the trees
’Tis not himself Narcissus sees.

NARCISSUS.

Ah ! no ; self-worship ne'er could show
Such ecstasy of joy and woe.
Who is it, then, he bends above
With those wild tears—that passionate love ?
Whom does he strive to clasp and kiss ?
Whose red mouth trembles up to his ?

That darling face, that gold-curled head,
Are not the living, but the dead.
The lad's fair image is a maid—
His sweet twin-sister who was laid
Last year beneath the ilex shade.
The white snow fell, the cold wind blew,
The flowers died, and she died too.
From babyhood they less had been
Like twins than like one doubly seen ;
They were so favoured and so fair,
That song and echo never were,
Nor morning star and evening star,
More magically similar.

And so, unhappy and belied,
Narcissus pined and drooped and died—
But yet not wholly ; he became
The golden flower which bears his name.

NARCISSUS.

And surely never flower grew
O'er heart more tender and more true ;
Nor bloomed one yet from human mould
More like to have a heart of gold.
O World, let love, so slandered, teach
Thy babbling tongue more kindly speech.

“No then, Now then.”

“AN infant crying in the night,” its startled heart
oppress’t with fears,
Some image vague its dreams affright, its weakness
wakens it to tears.

At once a hand with soft caress,
A voice of utmost tenderness,
Soothes it to rest and peace again :

“No then.”

“Now then.”

An infant still, ’mid darksome night, ’mid larger shadows,
darker fears,
With longer sorrow, deeper plight, like weakness still,
like trust and tears,

Man cries. A tide of succour swells,
Love’s fount divine o’erflows its wells,
Soothes him to rest and peace again ;—

“No then.”

“Now then.”

"NO THEN, NOW THEN."

Oh night of toil, of dread, of pain, of conquests, losses,
hopes and fears.

Oh mystic life, like troubled main, through all man's
moments, seasons, years.

Oh love and power that come at last,

Our labours, triumphs, terrors, past.

Oh peace that lives ; Oh sorrows slain ;—

"No then."

"Now then."

Ode on Elegiac Poetry.

THE fair vicissitudes of tree and sky,
Voices of bees and birds and straggling streams,
The aromas fine meandering fitfully
Where'er 'mid summer foliage Æolus dreams,—
These and what else alluring lives on earth
Yield their completeness of enchanted days
Only where youth with vision clear and keen
Contemplates nature as a happy birth,
Replete with fascination, love serene,
And hope whose outlook is on flowery ways.

Soon come the creeping years, the cruel years,
With thoughts like rain-drifts threatening in the night,
Come fleshly aches, despondencies and fears,
Decaying splendours and despairs that blight ;
But where the kindly Muse has pain dispelled,
Through teaching of the truth divinely true

ODE ON ELEGIAC POETRY.

That healing flows from her Medean skill,
Full gently guided are the steps of eld
O'er pastures bright with vernal freshness still,
As when on Eden's buds first dropt the dew.

O Muse ! whose ancient haunt was nigh some peak
Of tall Parnassus or the Aonian Mount,
Is there no humbler shrine for love to seek ?
Can inspiration boast no nearer fount ?
Fain would I greet thee 'mong my native dells,
On uplands green besprent with nibbling sheep,
Or in some vale where by their dingy cotes
Laborious swains their little harvests reap,
Where loitering Tweed its moving story tells,
Or tragic Yarrow melts with ballad notes.

In sylvan mead, with golden sunshine crowned,
Who would not dally with the beautiful,
Or listen idly to the purling sound
Of leaf-fringed waters glittering pure and cool ?
Such scene the poet sighs for, when his mood
Inclines to solitude and numbers sweet.
'Mid such delights in lively dream appeared
To bards of old quaint satyrs of the wood,
Or dancing naiads to the streams endeared,
With opaline foam-bells at their pearly feet.

ODE ON ELEGIAC POETRY.

Ah me ! what boon were left for languid age
Save for the witching power that poesy yields ?
The bard immured within his hermitage
May skim the sweets of all Elysian fields.
O'er sun-bright seas or starward he may rove,
Where'er an orb its feeble ray emits,
And catch of farthest skies each silvery trace
To illume the shy retreat where throned he sits,
And where the beauteous realms that own his love
May in contracted bournes have boundless space.

So, when the season speaks with wintry breath,
And from Cimmerian depths are moanings heard,
Until the doom of ever-nearing death
Has in the soul a vague misgiving stirred,
Let but soft music break from Lydian strings,
And some well-gifted minstrel soothly show
Man's ultimate goal celestial and divine,
Up to ethereal heights his spirit wings,
And musing wisely on his mortal woe,
Ennobling dreams with sweet contentments twine.

Who has not seen some angel of his hearth
Pass to decay, though not forgetfulness ?
The end has come of all his joy on earth :
Nought has he left to nurse but his distress.

ODE ON ELEGIAC POETRY.

How trilled the pleasure he could only share !
How keen the anguish to be all-where felt,
Now that his loved one in the cold clay sleeps !
The precious hopes that fondly with him dwelt
Are in his clinging heart, his dream, his prayer,
And haply in the verse with which he weeps.

Lo ! the grey pilgrim at the unopened gates !
Though groping ever near, he vainly yearns
To pierce the future which his coming waits.
But from his lengthening past how much he learns,
As, weaving garlands for belovèd tombs,
He decks with heavenly hues the cherished mould
Of the last wanderer who has that way trod !
The old have most to sing of being old,
Oh that their monodies might match the blooms
Even of the eternal amaranths of God !

Can human grief a holier descant crave
Than that which answers to the soul's desire ?
Sacred the growths upon a new-made grave,
And sacred too the metres that aspire
To ease with sense of beauty souls forlorn,
Elegiac wailings rise or low or loud.

ODE ON ELEGIAC POETRY.

How the world hearkens when they upward swell,
Shaming the moss-grown epitaphs that shroud
From casual eyes that can but vaguely mourn
The names and dates of which they nothing tell !

Oh, strong the joy that tearful music gives !
And strange that tenderest strains should most endure !
The poet wins from death the life that lives ;
While song the immortalest springs from fountains pure,
That make melodious murmur for the dead.
God shapes the theme to solace and exalt,
His anodynes for grief are in the air—
Where the flowers blossom—where the leaves are shed—
Within the soul that sails the midnight vault,
And reads the glory writ sublimely there.

Great heaven ! what far illimitable suns
In that blue spangled arch the mind explores !
While teeming time its endless æon runs,
Can death hang heavy on the life that soars ?
Songs of the dead make death no longer mute.
Oh think of all the deep delicious sighs
For whom the muse delights to mould the tear
That wakes the soothing of Apollo's lute !
Oh think of Lycid on his laureate bier,
And Adonais clothed in Grecian skies !

On the Hill of the Dead.

THERE is a narrow pathway familiar to my feet,
That crowns a bank of sadness and forms a silent street ;

The green moss lies upon it, so seldom is it trod,
Save when the living use it to leave their dead with God.

I love that silent pathway, where only footprints fall
Of those whose love is faithful beyond the grave's recall ;

And there I often linger and watch the setting sun
Light up the home that waits me when my short day is
done,

And sometimes idly wonder if when I come to stay,
Any will come anigh me to break the long, still day.

I shall be dead and know not, but if I knew it now,
The death-dew might not gather so coldly on my brow :

ON THE HILL OF THE DEAD.

Still I would live, for, living, the dead are with me yet,
Their life in mine up-gathered till I their love forget.

If God's above, I pray not that He my soul shall save,
But that He keep His arms close-wrapt about this little
grave :

It is the spot most precious on all His earth to me,
Where now my heart lies buried, where soon my bones
shall be.

The old cathedral's shadow comes creeping up the hill,
Uniting those who worship and those who wait His will ;

And night enwraps the living, and night enwraps the
dead,—
A short sleep, a long sleep, and who shall raise the
head ?

Par sine Pace.

PAUSE here ; sure here is peace ;
Noon, and the drowse of noon ;
Waters in slumbrous tune ;
Meadows with kine at ease ;

Pools where clear waters flow,—
Pools where the shining trout
Flicker ; while, in and out,
Darkling their shadows go.

Smoothly the river slides
Seaward ; through tangled grass
Swaying, its waters pass ;
Blue at its heart abides :

Blue of the placid sky ;
Set in soft grace between
Green banks, and shadowed green,
The great deeps of heaven lie.

IX SINE PACE.

Lo! from its silver lair,
Hunting the summer fly,
Gleaming a curve on high
Glances a trout in air ;

Lo! from the blossomed thorn
Swiftly on wings a-whirr
Flashes the kingfisher ;—
Straightway that trout is torn.

Peaceful this place, you say ?
Fool! it is red with strife ;
Ruthless, and swift, and rife,
Slayers come here to slay.

Renunciation.

TURN from me thy sweet face !
Give thou its radiance to some other one
To whom thou shalt be as the gleam of day,
Or, as the healing glory of the sun,
To scatter all his gloom of night away !
Turn those dear eyes of mercy far from me,
For all unworthy is my soul of thee !—
Turn from me thy sweet face !

Nay—hush thy tender voice !
It smites my stricken soul, as if from heaven
There fell the music of the Cherubim
Upon some lonely one from whom is riven
The hope of ever joining in that hymn
Whose melody no touch of sorrow knows,
But sweetens all the spheres through which it flows !—
Oh ! hush thy tender voice !

RENUNCIATION.

Thy garments all are white !
Ere yet we part may I but kiss the hem,
And, looking yet again on thy sweet face,
Pray that the virtue that shall heal, from them
May flow, to give my darkened life a grace ;
So that, if e'er I to thy glory come,
I may not stand by thee in sorrow dumb !—
Thy garments all are white !

May I but kiss thy feet
Ere yet we enter on our ways apart ?
The one to lead me to the falling night,
Where thy pure tears shall never touch my heart ;
The other, guiding thy sure steps to light !
I dare not look upon thy shining face,
But, for one solemn, heavenly moment's space,
Oh, let me kiss thy feet !

Stay, do I feel thy kiss
Upon my neck, as low I lie in dust ?
And has that wondrous love of thine stepped down
From its high eminence, to give the trust
That yet may add new lustre to thy crown ?
And shall our feet, with thy great love new shod,
Walk yet together on our way to God,
Through thy forgiving kiss ?

Replies.

LET them doubt and despond,
Seeing nothing beyond,
 And deride the sweet vision I see ;
Well I know they are wrong,
By the spell of the song
 That the skylark is singing to me.

Let them say in their haste
That e'en beauty is waste,
 And is only a phantom of charms ;
But I know they are wrong,
By the rapturous song
 That my darling's heart sings in my arms.

Let them sneer and declare
Marriage bonds are a snare,
 Hanging chains on the neck of the free ;
Oh, I know they are wrong,
By the prophet-like song
 That my baby-son sings on my knee !

Royal Exchange, Glasgow.

MARCH 1894.

ABOVE the city shines the snow,
The streets are thick with slush below,
Roofs all agleam, spires flecked with light,
And tufted casements edged with white,
Contrasting with the cheerless wet
As country joy with city fret.
And here, we know, whate'er betide,
The "Iron Duke" alone must ride :
Behind him hums the city mart,
Where moves the city's business heart ;
Around a hundred hurrying feet
Continuous throng the dreary street ;
But, with a chaplet on his brow,
His horse and he festooned with snow,
The silent warrior (warlike still
In all the sculptor's art and skill)

ROYAL EXCHANGE, GLASGOW.

Alone, alert, looks out on all,
As if he heard the trumpet-call
Of duty, sounding faint and far,
And urging on the shock of war.

The rubric of the snow I read,—
It lauds the pure in heart and deed ;
An angel voice, it seeks to win
Our human hearts from care and sin :
But does the stolid hero bear
No message to the common ear,
His giant spirit bear no sway
O'er smaller men of later day ?

Unmoved, with calmly serious face,
Endued with more than Roman grace,
The rider holds his fixed way,
And must the artist's will obey :
Come sun or snow, come wind or rain,
He doth his kingly look maintain,
With head erect and dauntless brow
As Waterloo were raging now,
And Wellington were still at hand
With ready help and prompt command.

ROYAL EXCHANGE, GLASGOW.

To me the sculptured figure there
His high ideal bids us share ;
Right on in Duty's path to go
Thro' wind and rain, thro' sun and snow,
Amid the worrying things of life,
The losses, crosses, pains and strife,
Amid men's spleen and littleness,
Amid misfortune and distress,
The warrior spirit still to hold,
Nor yield as slaves to lust of gold ;
Still up the steep of life to press
Undaunted, and assured no less
The Victor's honoured bays are ours,
Who triumph o'er the sordid powers,
Who vanquish self with courage high,
Who glorious live and glorious die !

Sea-pictures.

"The sea is in the hollow of His hand."

I.

ENORMOUS sea—illimitable night !
The shoreless waters—heaving spectral-white—
Vibrate with myriads of golden sparks.
The black boat leaves a track of flame. Beneath,
Run trails of flaming emerald, where the sharks
Cross and recross. In many a starry wreath
Innumerable medusæ shine and float,
Great coloured stars glow, through the blue-green air,
Gleam on the face of one who slowly dies.
All thro' the night two cavernous glazed eyes
Look blankly upward in a rigid stare.
Oh, Father in Heaven, he cannot speak Thy name ;
Take pity for the sake of Christ Thy son !
There is no answer—none ; no answer—none.
Crossing, recrossing underneath the boat,
The lean sharks weave their web of emerald flame.

SEA-PICTURES.

II.

Glad morning—sun and sea ! Zone beyond zone,
Blithe frolic waves and gold clouds softly blown !
On half the globe a sapphire glass that swings,
Catching the sun. No sail. No gleam of wings.
No shape of land. Look, who comes wafted here ?
What lonely yet intrepid mariner ?
Amid such vastnesses so mere a mite,
You scarce can see him for the brilliant light.
Look close ! That tiniest speck of brownish-red,
Perched on his single subtle spider-thread.
The bright breeze speeds his craft. Ere set of day
He'll reach some palmy isle now far away.

Secret Love.

THE seed is hid away in earth
And lies forgotten, till the sprout
From earth's full bosom rises out,
And Nature hails another birth.

The sacred life was long begun,
Beneath, unmarked by human eye,
Before the shoot could reach the sky,
Or it had leapt to greet the sun.

But not one step is hurried o'er ;
Each period has its hours to round,
Its dew to drink, and from the ground
Its sap to draw, nor less, nor more.

And long it grows ere blossoms come
With perfumes sweet and grace of mould ;
Till, after waiting long, behold !
The fruit at length is crown and sum.

SECRET LOVE.

The slowest is the surest growth,—
 'Tis always petting Nature's plan,
 Who likes not haste in plant nor man,
And bans all haste in life or troth.

So was our love in depths begun,
 And nourished long on secret dew,
 And fed on sunshine which it drew
From holier source than yonder sun.

And it can wait like Nature mute,
 Nor force its flower to blow too soon ;
 The plant which blossoms at high noon
Will shed at length the richest fruit.

Sing, Drookit Birdie.

A DROOKIT birdie, singin' there

In sleet and cauld, to nane but me :
Though heaven hath sent him scanty fare
Amid a winter o' despair,

When faint souls dwine an' die,
He maks the maist o' life, it seems,
An' faces Fate wi' sangs and dreams.

In books o' muckle lair, an' high,

Men speak o' Culture's calm an' peace ;
Wi' sairs an' straits when fain to cry,
They urge their puir philosophy
To mak oor sorrows cease :
Lang-nebbit names for "thole" are gi'en,
To help wae folk to dry their een.

But this is better comfort, frien',

To lanely hearts on dreary days—

SING, DROOKIT BIRDIE.

This whistlin' in a world o' spleen,
This singin' doon the hardships keen
 That rise on mortal ways.
Blaw loud, ye wintry winds, blaw lang,
But fend me wi' a cheery sang.

Oh ! drookit brithers, near an' far,
 In sleet an' cauld, where'er ye be,
Nae doot, than mine, your case is waur ;
Nae doot ye've mony a jolt an' jar,
 That heaven hath kept frae me :
But e'en on you some licht may gleam,
If, trustfu', you can sing an' dream.

Somebody's Bairn.

IN Blairdrummond kirkyaird
When the summer had gane,
In the grey early morning
I lingered alane.
It wasnae because
There were dear ones o' mine
There waiting the thrill
O' the trumpet Divine,
But because I had seen
A wee brown-sodded cairn
That told me whare lately
Cam' somebody's bairn.

I couldna e'en guess
Whase the wee thing had been,
For naething to tell
O' its kindred was seen.

SOMEBODY'S BAIRN.

E'en the fair marble cross
That sae near it was raised,
A woman, that wasnae
Its mother, weel praised.
Sae frae naething I learned,
And frae nane socht to learn,
What hearts yet were aching
For somebody's bairn.

Alas ! 'mang the graves e'en
We selfish may be ;
Or Blairdrummond kirkyaird
Played the wizard wi' me,
And showed me anither
Kirkyaird, far awa',
Whare dear ones were slumbering,
No ane nor yet twa.
Was it selfish o' me
For my ain dead to yearn,
No' caring whase tears
Fell for somebody's bairn ?

Beneath the brown sod
In Blairdrummond kirkyaird,
And the flowers that lay dead
On its dry, withered sward,

SOMEBODY'S BAIRN.

I saw a young face,
And it filled me wi' awe,
For it wasnae the face
O' a stranger I saw ;
But ane whase youth-comforts
I joyed aye to earn—
Ane taen awa early,
Like somebody's bairn.

Nae langer a charm
Had the kirkyaird for me,
Nor e'en the grave grace
O' the mossy yew-tree ;
I carednae wha first
'Mang its dark mools had lain
Nor wha were the heroes
Amang its lang-gane.
A' my thochts were o' Death,
And the cauld ruthless airn
That pierced my ain callan'
And somebody's bairn.

In the kirk o' Blairdrummond
When gloaming cam roun',
When the psalm and the hymn
Had my thochts raised aboon,

SOMEBODY'S BAIRN.

I heard the grand story
That aye and again
Awakens new solace
And drives awa' pain ;
And I thocht their lang rest,
Frae a' sorrow forfairn,
Seemed best baith for mine
And for somebody's bairn.

Stra'ven Lassies.

As I cam' oot by Stra'ven,
Stravaigin' ower the muir,
I met a winsome lassie
Wi' glintin' gowden hair ;
Her een they sklented blythely,
Weel pleased was I atweel,
Sae for a preen I spier'd her,
Quo' she, "Come tak' it, chiel."
Dear auld Stra'ven,
And her maidens young and fair ;
But sic like behavin'
Awa' yont there !

I chased the skirlin' kimmer,
Mony busses jink't and jouk't ;
We loupit ower the kail-stocks,
Her fleein' tails I pook't ;

TRA'VEN LASSIES.

An' aye as she slipp't bye me
Wi' lauchter in her ee,
The jaud she did defy me
Wi' "Ye'll no catch me."
Merry auld Stra'ven,
An' her winsome hinnies fair ;
But sic like behavin'
Awa' yont there !

At last, my arms around her,
I press't her to my breast,
And brawly, sirs, she flutter't
Like a birdie o'er its nest :
She rustle't an' she bustle't,
And she coyly tried to flee,
Sayin' "Haud awa', ye rascal,
For ye man'na kiss me."
Cantie auld Stra'ven,
And her bonnie lassies fair ;
But sic like behavin'
Awa' yont there !

I pree'd her mou' sae saucy,
First ane, twa, three,
And syne gi'ed back the lassie
Ilk ane I stole so free.

STRA'VEN LASSIES.

She war'd me, and she daur'd me,
Cryin' "Let a body be!
Toots, hooley, sir, gae wa' noo,
An' dinna toozle me."
Croose auld Stra'ven,
An' her winsome lassies fair;
But sic like behavin'
Awa' yont there!

Wi' that oot cam' her minnie,
And I lat the lassie be;
Quo I, "I loe your hinnie,
And it's mine I houp she'll be.
I lat the lassie be, man,
But she winna let me,
For aye sin syne she jinks me
Wi' "Ye winna marry me."
Sly auld Stra'ven,
And her winsome maidens fair;
But sic like behavin'
Awa' yont there!

What can a laddie dae, sirs,
Wha's taiglet on the muir,
Wi' chasin' o' a lassie
Wha tempts him unco sair,

STRA'VEN LASSIES.

Wi' chaffin' an' wi' daffin',
An' lauchin' looks sae slee,—
What can he dae, but e'en to say,
 “Sweet lassie, marry me.”
 Ring the bells o' Stra'ven,
 For her maidens young and fair ;
 But sic like behavin'
 Awa' yont there!

Summer Idyll.

LIGHT, dappled cloudlets flecked the sky,
As through the fields my love and I
Strayed slow amidst the bleating sounds
Of lambs that skipped in merry rounds.
Loud came the curlew's fluting call ;
Clear trilled the lark's full madrigal ;
And we were bound in love's sweet thrall,—
And the sun shone o'er the meadows !

The shimmering breath of sunny morn
Revealed its path across the corn ;
Each step was traced by ebb and swell,
As verdant ridges rose and fell.
The bells of blue, and poppies gay,
Smiled on us in our sunny way ;
The earth was ours through all that day,—
And the sun shone o'er the meadows !

SUMMER IDYLL.

The mother bird sat on her nest,
The bee clung to the lily's breast ;
The maiden lingered by the spring,
Though Time and Fate were on the wing,
In shy hope waiting for her swain
To breathe that wondrous, witching strain
That aye has wooed and will again,—
And the sun shone o'er the meadows !

The sailor's boy looked o'er the bay,
And whistled low a love-winged lay.
Though ships may sink and winds may blow,
He knows not yet of human woe.
And we together, hand in hand,
Went through the fair melodious land,
Afar from storm and moaning strand,—
And the sun shone o'er the meadows !

The mill-wheel turned its busy round,
And lulled with spirit-soothing sound.
To sea and sky and earth and air,
Our souls went out in praise and prayer.
Oh, sweet the love that brightens all,
And richer makes the throstle's call,
And binds two hearts in golden thrall,
As the sun shines o'er the meadows !

Sunshine in December.

AMID the city's grime and fog
And grey light of December,
The heart hath still the flowers of June
And sunshine to remember.

The rain slants on the window-pane,
The winds blow shrill and eerie,
The brown earth, like a dead thing lies,
Sodden and cold and dreary.

Content ye! yet, amid the gloom,
This happy thought retaining—
The summer's sunshine once hath been,—
There's sunshine still remaining!

And shade and sunshine, deftly blent,
Make up life's changeful story,
And midnight's mirk will pass away
In day-dawn's roseate glory.

Sweet Solitude.

DEEP in the wood the throstle chants
His lyric strung with liquid pearls,
Whilst sweet replies come from the haunts
Of mellow-throated, fluting merles.
Around the tassels of the pine
In eager quest low hums the bee,
Whilst drowsy lowings of the kine
Come from the clover-scented lea.

A snatch of some fair milkmaid's song
Floats o'er the dale, then all is still,
Save the cock's clarion, clear and strong,
Blown from the farm upon the hill.
A twitter here, yonder a strain
Of melody ; no harsher sound
Than the lone woodman's rumbling wain
Breaks on the solitude profound.

SWEET SOLITUDE.

Here we can dreamily repose
Throughout the livelong summer day,
'Mid fragrant thyme and sweet wild-rose,
The world's sad music far away.
Here all the night the summer moon
O'er the green aisles its watch will keep,
Whilst elves will sing their mystic tune
Which holds the lulling runes of sleep.

Here, by the fountain's mossy brink,
We'll sit in deep ecstatic dream,
Nor in our gladness seek to drink
Of Helicon's immortal stream.
Apollo's foot in Tempe's shade
Ne'er trod on glades so green and fair,
And piping Orpheus never made
Such music as now fills the air.

Thrice-blessèd Solitude ! of Sleep
The tender sister, thy soft breast
Is refuge safe for souls who weep
And yearn for peace and heaven-sent rest.
In life's long fight and fierce travail,
When cares increase and joys are few,
When hope is faint, and friends all fail,
Thine arms are safe, thy heart is true !

Tennyson.

O THOU, who long thy constant friend bewail'd :
Was ever friendship's voice so true and fond ?
When thine own last mysterious sea was sail'd,
Whom found'st thou waiting on the shore beyond ?

Thy harp struck fire through all its magic strings,
Strong to imbue weak man with manly trust ;
Thy pointing finger showed the flash of wings
O'er the forsaken tenement of dust.

Lo, the full noonday richer for thy notes.
Lo, how the midnight stars more grandly move !
In all thy song a dream of glory floats,
Pulses the mighty universe with love.

The anguish of the world was in thy blood,
The poet's pearls were in thine eyes to weep ;
Till, in the calm of death's divinest mood,
Thy soul went forth, a fearless tryst to keep.

TENNYSON.

Now thy great death-chant we make sadly ours ;
Now thy last triumph lifts to loftier spheres :
We feel the pity of thy funeral flowers,
We know thy victory over time and tears.

Laments for thee are in the beating rains,
Thy requiem surges in the sea's distress ;
Yet still the vanish'd hand its touch retains,
And still the silent voice has power to bless.

The minstrel, parted from the lute he loves,
Needs for his name no dull memorial-stone :
Its music lingers in the listening groves,
Where gladness meets, where sorrow makes its moan.

That which thou saw'st of love in hidden skies,
Still burns a cheering orb within our ken :
Thus, though for ever dark those buried eyes,
Their seeing lives, a light to living men.

So, standing in this vale of worldly cares,
I vision thee, though lost to mortal sight,
A growing splendour on the altar-stairs
That reach through darkness up to God's own light.

That Far Country.

BEYOND the plains of Butforthis,
Behind the peaks of Butforthat,
There lies a land, a land of bliss,
Which all men would be at.

There no strife is ; the kinsfolk there
Jar not as mortal kinsfolk jar ;
Its lovers love with love most fair ;
Its friends most steadfast are.

No ill is thought ; no lies are sped ;
The tempted lets the tempter pass ;
No man slinks forth with dismal head,
Shamed by the man he was.

There each has found the good he sought ;
There all have wrought the things they schemed ;
Naught that is fondest comes to naught
Of all its folk have dreamed.

THAT FAR COUNTRY.

Yet none may to this country climb ;
Only, at whiles, a man may win
Waft of its charmed bells a-chime,—
The bells of Mighthavbin.

The Beadle's Lament.

NAE mair, auld Sabbath Book, nae mair
Shall we twa tak' the poopit-stair ;
Aneath my arm wi' decent care
 Ye've traivelled lang ;
But noo, like bauchles past repair,
 We twa maun gang.

For yon sleek Herd, wi' face o' whey,
Wha cam' last Spring frae yont Glenspey
Has set his will, has wrocht his wey,
 Wi' laird and cottar ;
'Till e'en the Session are as cley,
 And he the pottar !

He's turned the auld kirk upside-doon ;
Pentit the wa's blue, green, and broon ;
The book-brod, tossed roun' and roun',
 Glowers wi' red plush on't ;
And in the pews ilk glaiket loon
 Cocks whare he's cushon'd !

THE BEADLE'S LAMENT.

The douce precentor, Dauvit Parks,
Nae mair in his bit boxie barks ;
An organ, stuffed wi' water-warks,
Maks a' lugs dirl :
And twa-three lads in lang white sarks
Start aff the skirl.

A braw new Bible has been bocht,—
Revised, to clink wi' Modern Thocht ;
A braw new beadle has been socht,
Soople and snod ;
And this new Herd, himsel' has wrocht
A braw new God !

A God wha wadna fricht the craws ;
A God wha never lifts the taws ;
Wha never heard o' Moses' laws,
On stane or paper ;
A kind o' thowless Great First Cause,
Skinklin' thro' vapour.

As for the Bible, if you please,
He thinks it's true,—in twa degrees ;
Some pairt is chalk, some pairt is cheese ;
But he'll engage
To riddle oot the biggest lees
Frae ilka page !

THE BEADLE'S LAMENT.

The Fall, he thinks, is nocht but fable ;
Adam ne'er delfed, nor killed was Abel ;
Men never built the Tower of Babel,
Nor lented an Ark ;
While auld Methuselah's birthday-table
Clean jumps the mark !

No' that he says sic things straucht oot ; -
Lord ! he's as sly's Loch Leven troot ;
But here wi' Science, there wi' Doot,
He crams his sermons ;
Thrawin' the plainest text aboot,
To please the Germans.

The auld blue Hell he thinks a haiver ;
The auld black Deil a kintry claiver ;
And what is Sin, but saut to savour
Mankind's wersh luggies ?
While Saunts, if ye'd believe the shaver,
Are kirk-gaun puggies !

The Lord have mercy on sic teachin',
And on the kirk that tholes sic speech in ;
A heathen-man, wi' heathen screechin',
Were less to blame ;
Satan himsel' would damn sic preachin'
For very shame !

THE BEADLE'S LAMENT.

Oh ! for the days when sinners shook
Aneath the true Herd's righteous crook ;
When men were telt that this auld Book
 Is God's ain word ;
When texts were stanes waled frae the brook,
 And prayer a sword.

Four ministers I've seen ta'en ower
To yon kirkyaird ; and a' the four
Were men o' prayer, were men o' power,
 In kirk and session ;
Preachers wha nailed ye wi' a glower
 To your trangression.

Oh ! for sic men o' godly zeal ;
Men wha could grab ye, head and heel,
And slype ye to the Muckle Deil,
 Withoot a qualm ;
The sinner thro' the reek nicht squeal,—
 They sang a psalm !

Stout Herds were they, and steeve their creed ;
But this Chiel drones a wee bit screed,
In which God's will, and what Christ dreed,
 Are things to guess on ;
Yammers for our Eternal need
 A bairn's schule-lesson.

THE BEADLE'S LAMENT.

A wee schule-lesson dull and dowff,
Scribbled atween twa games at gowff;
For at the tee he maks his howff
Baith syne and sune :
But wha cares for a beadle's bowff
Wha's day is dune.

My day is dune ; and, richt or wrang,
The thocht comes like a wæfu' sang :
This Book and me, we've traivelled lang
The poopit-stair ;
But that's a gate we twa shall gang
Nae mair, nae mair !

The Blind Musician.

SHE sits, where meet the public ways,
Nor craves the public boon,
But patient-wise she sits and plays
A fitful, wheezy tune.

Her numb hands fumble at the keys ;
Her feet to quick airs beat ;
While March wind blows across her knees
Keen gusts of bitter sleet.

A mild grace lies about the lass ;
Her set face shines full clear ;
Yet most men take her tune, and pass ;—
While no Christ passes here.

The grey cathedral near her glooms
'Gainst gaps of windy light ;
Behind her gleam the city's tombs
Ghost-like upon the height ;

THE BLIND MUSICIAN.

The city's tumult round her drifts ;
 Above drive smoke-gloomed skies,—
To these, to all, her face uplifts
 The pathos of blind eyes.

The Clockmaker.

OUR aged clock for some time past
Has whiles gane slow and whiles gane fast,
Just as the win' was North or Wast—

And, sad to see,
It seemed to feel the passing blast,
Like you or me.

But yesterday it paused to swither,
While wecht and pend'lum scolded ither,
And used sic terms as "Lazy brither,"

Wi' wheezy din,
Till, wroth, it stoppit a' thegither
At hauf-past ane.

I took it doun wi' mickle care,
And saw that stour and rust were there ;
Quo I, "Your wark has been richt sair,

But dinna staun'."
Syne oiled it wi' a stockin' ware,
And set it gaun.

THE CLOCKMAKER.

It started wi' a steady swing,
And tickit wi' a tunefu' ring
Till midnicht, when the surcunt thing,
 Wi' dolefu' mane,
Said, sabbin', "Send for—Jamie King,"
 And stopped again.

I kenna hoo it learned your name,
But they that tell't are no' to blame—
Sae when ye are nae thrang at hame
 Just step this way,
And mak it worthy o' your fame,—
 Come ony day.

The Coilin' o' the Hay.

It was doun in yonder meadow,
An' weel I mind o't yet,
There were happy hearts as ever
Were by luck thegither met ;
When a dozen lads an' lasses,
A' as fresh as flowers o' May,
Made the labour licht wi' daffin',
At the coilin' o' the hay.

Oh, the laughin', oh, the daffin',
A' the bonnie summer day ;
Oh, the fun, an' oh, the frolic,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

There was Geordie, Wull, an' Sandy,
There was Rob, an' Tam, an' Pate ;
There was Mysie, Jean, an' Mary,
An' Jemima, Nell, an' Kate ;

THE COILIN' O' THE HAY.

An' aye we wroucht, an' sang, an' wroucht,
Like bees on a clover brae ;
An' ilka 'oor gaed merrillie
At the coilin' o' the hay.

Oh, the singin', oh, the ringin'
O' the voices ower the brae ;
Oh, the fun, an' oh, the frolic,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

An' some wad sleely court betimes,
Though maist were deil-ma-care,
An' aft were rowed amang the wrack
Till ilka bane was sair.
But aye the ither rig was redd,
An' the wark gaed on alway,
For the mair we reel'd the mair we span,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

Oh, the workin', oh, the winnin',
A' the bonnie summer day ;
Oh, the fun, an' oh, the frolic,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

Do ye mind o't, Mary Watson ?
Do ye mind o't, Georgie Blair ?
Do ye mind o't, a' ye ither,
Whaur ye're settled, here an' there ?

THE COILIN' O' THE HAY.

There's twenty years gane ower yer heads,
An' ye'll no' be a' sae gay,
But ye'll smile yet when ye mind upon
The coilin' o' the hay.

Oh, the laughin', oh, the daffin',
A' the bonnie summer day ;
Oh, the fun, an' oh, the frolic,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

The sun ne'er shines sae bonnie noo,
The flowers are no' sae fair ;
There's nocht that gi'es the pleasure here
That a' thing ga'e doon there.
It's maybe no' that times are changed,
Or these are waur than they ;
But ither lads an' lasses noo
Are coilin' o' the hay.

Oh, the laughin', oh, the daffin',
Oh, the joy o' life's young day ;
Oh, the fun, an' oh, the frolic,
At the coilin' o' the hay.

The Contented Cottar.

OH ! I hae seen amang the clouds
The skylark steer his wherry,
And I hae heard, afar frae crowds,
The mavis whistling merry ;
Than me nae bird can be mair blest,
Unseen, unkert by ony,
Or hae a mate in his wee nest
Sae blythe, sae kind, sae bonnie.

She steeks my sarks and clouts my claes,
She darns my oot-heel stocking,
And jogs me on wi' blame and praise—
Whiles preaching and whiles joking ;
She is my doctor, cook, and clerk,
My bank of countless treasure ;
To toil for her frae dawn to dark
It isna toil, it's pleasure.

THE CONTENTED COTTAR.

When toiling on the sluggard land,
Each thought of thee, my beauty !
With deeper purpose nerves my hand,
And plainer makes life's duty :
And wi' thy bairn upon my knee,
The mair I search the lammy
For ae fault o' his sire, I see
Ten graces o' his mammy !

The First Nutch o' the Year.

WHEN the Ne'arday week had ended,
And a heap o' throats were dry,
While a thin auld moon was shining,
Wi' the Queen o' Love close by,—
Doon again our colliers ventured,
When they heard that a' was clear,—
Unco laith to lea' the star-licht
O' a cauld an' dry New Year.

Lang they lingered round the fire-lamp,
Wi' its warm licht blawing wast,
And the vote for bidin' idle
Ae day mair was a' but past ;
When the maister's sel' amang them,
Wi' a hearty mornin' cheer,
And a word about the weather,
Wished them a' a Guid New Year.

THE FIRST HUTCH O' THE YEAR.

There were hints aboot their "*Ne'arday*,"
Gi'en as braid as braid could be ;
But a solemn, lang head-shakin',
As he whiffed his pipe, gied he.
Then said ane, his lamp re-trimmin',
"O' oor *Ne'arday* hae nae fear,
And as weel this day's anither
Try wi' wark the new New-year."

Then, their picks and pins a' gathered,
They forsook the realms aboon
(But ye canna mak a wonder
O' a thing that's daily done).
Weel the thinkin' anes amang them
Kent that wark's but wark, whare'er,—
At the tap, or at the centre,
And at a' times o' the year.

As the Morning Star grew dimmer,
And the mune began to hide,
Said the maister, ever smoking,
"Ay! they're doon, but will they bide?"
And the question wasna answered
(For the collier aye was queer)
Till on frozen plates oot steamin'
Cam the first hutch o' the year.

The Forest of Arden.

THERE is no forest of Arden now,
With its love-lit glades and sighing trees,
Its tender bark for the lover's brow,
And cool green moss for worshipping knees.

Is sweet, sore love, with the forest, dead?
Has passion, with this old world, grown grey?
Or runs the blood in our veins as red
As it leapt through hearts in Shakspeare's day?

My feet ring out on the hard grey stone,
The noise of the streets is in my ear,
Yet green boughs over my head have grown,
Whose shadows dance in the sunlight clear.

Lamps, doors, and shop-fronts, lanced with sweet pain,
Breathe to Orlando Rosalind's name;
If it be chalk, and if it be Jane,
Loving and sighing are still the same.

THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

With city street for the love-lit glade,
And iron lamps for the sighing trees,
The foolish part of Orlando's played
In sober, sensible days like these.

The Gates of the Sea.

RICH amber bars flecked all the West
With ruddier glow than molten ore ;
The haven lay in dreamy rest,
And all along the shining shore
Bright children built of fickle sand
A house but for an hour to stand ;
And oh, it was a merry land,
By the magic Gates of the Sea !

The sailor's rosy boy of nine
Sat on an old sloop's anchor chain ;
What made his lustrous blue eyes shine
Bright as the splendours of the main ?—
He saw far down the glowing West
What seemed the Islands of the Blest,—
The land of endless love and rest,—
By the shining Gates of the Sea !

THE GATES OF THE SEA.

The mellow chimes of eventide
Fell from the belfry on the hill ;
Two happy lovers, side by side,
Strayed slow by shore and dell and rill.
Thrice dear to them were sea and sky,
The throstle's song, the curlew's cry,
Through love's bewitching alchemy,
By the golden Gates of the Sea !

Beneath the cliff a maiden sits
With wandering mind, and strangely sings
An eerie song, while round her flits
The lone grey owl on silent wings.
She looks across the seething main,
And, in her melancholy strain,
Croons that her love will come again
Through the solemn Gates of the Sea !

The child's sweet laugh, the maiden's song,
The cheerless hearth, the widow's woe ;
The cry of anguish loud and long
Are on those tides that come and go.
And pale grief follows wild delight,
And morning gilds the skirts of night,
And sweetens many a sad eye's sight
By the Gates of the changeful Sea !

The Heather.

If I were king of France, that noble fine land,
And the gold was elbow deep within my chests,
And my castles lay in scores along the wine-land
With towers as high as where the eagle nests ;
If harpers sweet, and swordsmen stout and vaunting,
My history sang, my stainless tartan wore,
Was not my fortune poor, with one thing wanting,—
The heather at my door !

My galleys might be sailing every ocean,
Robbing the isles, and sacking hold and keep,
My chevaliers go prancing at my notion,
To bring me back of cattle, horse, and sheep ;
Fond arms be round my neck, the young heart's tether,
And true love-kisses all the night might fill,
But oh ! *mochree*, if I had not the heather,
Before me on the hill !

THE HEATHER.

A hunter's fare is all I would be craving,
A shepherd's plaiding and a beggar's pay,
If I might earn them where the heather, waving,
Gave fragrance to the day.
The stars might see me, homeless one and weary,
Without a roof to fend me from the dew,
And still content, I'd find a bedding cheery,
Where'er the heather grew !

The Jolly Little Quaker.

WHEN first I met the gentle maid,
She "yea'd" and "nay'd" in answer
To questions asked, but ne'er essayed
To talk with any man, sir.
From childhood's innocent repose
It seemed a shame to wake her,
Yet did I pluck the sweet blush rose—
I mean, the little Quaker !

How well she looked in sober guise,
With neither lace nor frilling,
That day I read within her eyes—
"Friend, kiss me ! I am willing."
And how she blushed and trembled when
I vainly sought to make her
Give back one kiss in every ten—
Dishonest little Quaker !

THE JOLLY LITTLE QUAKER.

We married were. I must admit

I'd always lived with sinners

Who liked to see the world a bit,

And revelled in their dinners ;

So to a very little sin

I gently sought to break her :

E'gad ! I'd soon to hold her in—

Apostate little Quaker !

No more she walks in sad grey gown,

A sober-minded matron ;

Of ev'ry "fal-lal" shop in town

She has become a patron :

To concerts, balls, and plays she goes ;

She even made me take her

To "Brighton" and "Pink Dominoes"—

The wicked little Quaker !

The King's Hie-way.

(A REPORTED CASE IN THE TIME OF KING DAVID II.)

ANE man, be the king's hie-way,
Is ca'in' ane tup and ane wedder,
And sae that' they gang na astray
Wi' ane tow they're taigled togedder.
Be-chance, ane puir horse in their track
Upon the said hie-way is sleepand,
Streaked oot at his ease, wi' sair back,
And nane sort of guard the while keepand.

Ane scheip to the richt gangs apart,
And ane to the left gies a gallup ;
The tow gies the sair back a scart,
And waukens the horse wi' a wallup :
Quherethrow the said horse, richt or wrang,
Is moved to rise up, wi' tail swingand,
And aff at a trot he bode gang
Wi' scheips on ilk side o' him hingand.

THE KING'S HIE-WAY.

Swith, hither and thither he rins
Throw neip fields and sundrie like places,
Until to a miln yett he wins,
The end o' his cantrips and paces :
In time he louns throw the miln dure,
The tow on his back scarting deeper,
Wi' fire in a lowe on the flure,—
A miln and a fire without keeper.

The fire being scattered, the miln
Is brent, and all in it togedder
Are reestit as white as ane kiln,—
Horse, halter, corn, tup, tow, and wedder.
Demanded, a verdict on aith,
Quhilk stands the ill-dune and ill-doer ?
And quha sall mak' guid a' this skeath ?
And quhilk's the pursued and pursuer ?

Replied—The said horse first sall pay
The scheips that were brent intill mutton,
For why, on the king's free hie-way,
Is not where he sauld hae doun-sutton :
The miller sall pay for the horse
And scheips, that so hetly were ended,
For why, he left open, of course,
His miln, with ane fire unattended.

THE KING'S HIE-WAY.

Likewise, be it furder declared,
For guid of the king and his lieges,
Said road sall be forthwith repaired
To fourteen feet brede 'tween the hedges ;
That he that hath cause to ca' scheip
May ca' them in safety and leizure,
And he quha's sick horse fa's asleep
May let the puir beast ha'e his pleezure.

The Lawyer's Cat.

LET the truth at once be written
Now, I sing about a cat
That has never been a kitten,
That has never slain a rat ;
But of tails she has as many
As a tinker's Tab has lives,—
Tails that wag as fast as any
Tongues of wives ! wives ! wives !

Once the cats, the gay deceivers,
Down in Egypt, we are told,
Were much worshipped by believers,
Sitting on their thrones of gold ;
And, I'm certain, no one grudges
That the whisking little wench
Should sit down with British Judges
On the bench ! bench ! bench !

THE LAWYER'S CAT.

For we're troubled, greatly troubled,
 With the wretch who kicks his wife,
With the brute with fist up-doubled,
 With the scamp that draws his knife ;
And while some say prison raiment
 Is enough to purge the sin ;
Others think they need repayment
 On their skin ! skin ! skin !

But we're told that bareback thrashing
 Tends to brutalise the breast ;
That for stabbing, kicking, gashing,
 Gentle treatment is the best.
But for men who maim and ravish,
 With no soul above a rat,
The best beast to tame the savage
 Is the cat ! cat ! cat !

The Legend of the Smithy Door.

A HUNDRED years ago, and more,
There lived and toiled with pith,
By "Hanging Ditch" in Manchester,
A very jolly smith.

Like other smiths, with forge and tongs,
And bang and clang of might,
He smote and shaped the glowing brand,
From early morn till night.

All sorts of iron work, I trow,
He mended and he made—
Horse-shoes, ploughshares, and weaving gear,
The harrow, hoe, or spade.

And when a customer he had
Who would run up a score,
The tally and accompt he kept
Was chalked behind his door.

THE LEGEND OF THE SMITHY DOOR.

And few there were would wrong the smith—
He was an honest wight,
And glad he was to wipe the score
When he was paid aright.

But by-and-by a gallows knave
Ran up a score in chalk,
Then put his finger to his nose,
The jolly smith to balk.

The smith no hostage had in hand
To make the payment good :
The only document he had—
Some sturdy planks of wood.

“Wilt th’ pay?” he cried, “When wilt th’ pay?”
Each time the knave he met.
“I owe thee nowt—What must I pay?”
The answer he would get.

The thief would swear the debt was paid—
He’d cheat by hook or crook—
Or, that he ne’er employed the smith,
And ne’er was in his book.

THE LEGEND OF THE SMITHY DOOR.

So off to Salford straight one day
The jolly smith did budge,
To plead his cause against the knave
Before the worthy judge.

Then, quoth the knave unto the charge,
With seeming injured looks,
"No penny do I owe the rogue,—
Let him produce his books."

The worthy judge upheld that plea,
And asked the books to see
Wherein said services were charged,
Or payments there might be.

"Faith," quo' the smith, "I have a book—
A good and big one too—
And I will fetch it in a trice,
To prove my words are true."

So back he went, by leave of court,
Straight to his smithy door,
And, with a mighty wrench, the boards
He from their hinges tore.

*

THE LEGEND OF THE SMITHY DOOR.

Away, like Samson, then he ran,
Nor once his speed did slack,
And stumbled, sweating, into court,
His ledger on his back.

The judge ruled like an upright man—
As eke all judges should—
He scanned the record writ in chalk,
And held the tally good.

So he adjudged the knave should pay
Both damages and score ;
And little grudged the smith, I ween
To carry back his door.

And to immortalise the smith,
And hold the knave in shame,
The street, 'yclept "The Smithy Door,"
Was after held in name.

The Liberator.

HE strode into the market-place,
 Blithe master of the singing art,
The light of music in his face,
The lord of music in his pace,
 The lilt of music in his heart.

Free lover of a people free,
 The people blessed him when he came :
He soothed their pangs with melody
Of love and truth and liberty ;
 And kindled hope's eternal flame.

The master smiled, as in a dream
 Of ancient days when life was young ;
When he, inspired by glint and gleam
Of sun, and moon, and star, and stream,
 Warbled with babily-babbling tongue.

THE LIBERATOR.

Warbled ! O yet with power unfit
To shape his dreams as they should be,
Long bondman of his bounded wit,
Till in him like a star was lit
The fire of art that made him free.

Then sang he round the world, and men
Rushed forth to hear the master sing :
He wiled the wretched from their den,
He drew dusk Ishmael from his fen,
And made him kin with Christ the King.

Now moved he in the market, where
Soft trills of music charmed his ear,
As if he breathed delicious air,—
A song to heal a soul's despair,
And lift it to a heavenly sphere.

And who the singers ? Who but they,
The songsters of the wood and mead,
Trapped by the spoiler for a prey,
Reft from the joyance of the day,
Sold for a price by human greed.

THE LIBERATOR.

The master burned with rage : he knew
That freedom was the soul of song,
And song the soul of life, and threw
A ransom to the merchant crew,
And so redeemed the minstrel throng.

He oped their bars : he gave them wing
To wander over land and sea :
"Go, gentle brothers, soar and sing ;
Carol, and make the rhyme-bells ring
Freedom to dungeoned misery !"

The Lord Lamington.

(FEBRUARY 15, 1890.)

PASSED now within the veil ; true-hearted as a youth,
Who ne'er lost boyhood's freshness through the years ;
On noon of life, on evening's slow decline,
The morning dew lay pure, as sun-smit tears.

The kindly hand we fondly grasp no more ;
No more for us the gladdening eye, the smile ;
With other friends he is,—a noble band,—
And we must e'en in patience wait the while.

Not all is gone ; some soothing memory lives,
As when the sun-down leaves the distant hills,
We track its gleamings o'er the moorland heights,
And see them touch with radiance Clydesdale rills.

THE LORD LAMINGTON.

Not much for us ! not answering to our grasp,—
Yet all we have, and thus we cherish more
Those signallings as from another clime—
The God-sent glimpses of a far-off shore.

Italian art, and Italy's fair skies,
The banks of Arno and imperial Rome,—
He, feeling all their cultured charm, their spell,
Yet turned leal-hearted to his Scottish home.

Soft may he sleep beside Clyde's rounding wave,
There fitly lie 'neath Lamington's old tower,—
No soul more loyal to the storied past,
Or mindful more of Scotland's Patriot's hour.

Out of the light of sense,—within the veil ;
Think you there is no light save what we see ?
Nay ! all this vision but obscures the thought
Of highest life in God's Eternity.

The Miller's Song.

I stood beside the mill-stream,
When all the world was new;
My sweetheart stood beside me,
And oh, but her eyes were blue.
The dappled clouds of summer
Were sailing o'er the sky;
And the miller leaned on his gate and sang,
As the stream went gliding by—

It's oh, but the world's a-merry,
And it's oh, but the world's a-sad,
But clickity-clack goes the hopper's sound,
While the wheel goes merrily round and round,
Round and round, and the corn is ground,
Let the world be sad or glad.

I stood beside the mill-stream,
With my sorrow and tears alone,
For the bright blue eyes were cold and dim
That once so kindly shone.

THE MILLER'S SONG.

And yet the sun was shining,
For all so sad was I,
And the miller still leaned on his gate, and sang
To the mill-stream gliding by—

It's oh, but the world's a-merry,
And it's oh, but the world's a-sad,
But clickity-clack goes the hopper's sound,
While the wheel goes merrily round and round,
Round and round, and the corn is ground,
Let the world be sad or glad.

The Minister's Cow.

THE minister's cow, the hale parish can tell,
Is braw, big, an' broon, like the minister's sel' ;
She has twa gentle een, 'neath a grave solemn brow,
An' she's canny and quate—like a minister's cow.

Weans, clappin' her whyles as she staun's in the byre,
Hae seen in her een their ain faces on fire !
An' the saft glossy hair, when their fingers gaed thro',
Made it gran' to get straikin' the minister's cow.

Douce an' sober at milkin' time ever is she,
Nor fashious when out on the glebe's open lea ;
Tho' dougs barkit lang, an' tho' flees round her flew,
She aye kep' her temper, the minister's cow.

An' her big-hearted bachelor-maister likes weel
Frae the study an' sermon at gloamin' to steal,
To keek in an' ca' for a cog reamin' fu'
O' the rich creamy wine as it comes frae the cow.

THE MINISTER'S COW.

'Tis said, too, in daytime when walkin' alane,
Heart-wearit wi' worrying cares o' his ain,
An' cares o' his flock neither lichtsome nor few,
He'll gang an' commune wi' his ain patient cow.

Ay, an' mony's the lesson she reads him, we ken,
For there's caution wi' her, when there's folly wi' men ;
As the stour-cluds are laid wi' the fa' o' the dew,
So there's calm an' content on the grass wi' his cow.

Peace an' patience she brings him, the minister says,
Grave rebuke in her een for men's passionate ways,
An' reward sweet as love for thochts tender an' true
He aye fin's in the face o' his ain canny cow.

An' mortals wha think themsel's maisters an' mair
Ower the lower creation in earth, sea, an' air,
Micht dae waur, in their tantrums, ere troubles ensue,
Than tak' thocht—like himsel'—o' the minister's cow.

The Modern Mercury.

BESSIE, bring your shining skates,
Busk on your dainty shoon,—
The frost is hard, the ice is keen,
The sun beams red at noon.

The swallow's brood has flown away
To skim the shining Nile ;
The blackbird and the lark are dead,
Or silent for awhile :

The frost has fretted every pane,
Hoar whitens every spray ;
But hearken how the laughter rings
Along the ice to-day !

Last night the merry minstrelsy
Sent waltzers through the hall
Beneath the cunning mistletoe
And holly on the wall.

THE MODERN MERCURY.

But now the grand piano's closed,
The loud trombone is dumb,
The fiddles in their coffins lie,
The clarionet's gone home.

The swallow feet that skimmed the floor
All softly nested be ;
No daring lover whispers now
Beneath the white berrie.

But deep amid the frosted woods
Th' enchanted lakelet lies ;
The berries here are red as lips,
The sloes as black as eyes.

Here half the joyous company
That led the dance last night
Have bound their wish-wings to their feet,
Mated, and taken flight.

There's dew upon the ruddy lip
The hawthorn ne'er can know ;
There's glad light in the glancing eye
That comes not to the sloe :

THE MODERN MERCURY.

A scarlet flush comes to the cheek,
A lily to the brow,
And thoughts that last night feared to speak
Have burst their fetters now.

And as we hand in hand pursue
The missing Muse's art,
Though winter's in the frosty sky
There's Christmas in my heart.

The Old Road.

LIKE a ribbon, taut, on the mountain's breast
The new road climbs from the shore to the crest :
It is firm to the foot, and hard and white,
And moves to the point as a strong will might.

It carries the youth of the town away,
Eager of heart, to the world's affray :
The hillside echoes their resolute tread
Again and again, till the sound falls dead.

I love not the new : my wayworn feet
Turn ever aside where the two roads meet,
And at every step on the old hill-track
I seem to be bringing my boyhood back.

I rest for a spell on the crumbling bridge,
While the brisk new road climbs over the ridge ;
Then I loiter and linger on my way,
As an old man treading an old road may.

THE OLD ROAD.

It is vanishing fast, this old hill-track,

The moorland is creeping to take it back,

And the new road's there : there are young hearts, too,—

'Tis time that the turf o'er the old ones drew.

The Peesweep Inn.

(RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE PRESIDENT.¹)

COME, all ye Ballad-makers bold, and listen unto me,
And I shall tell of sacrilege that every eye may see,—
Unrighted wrong and base despite done to your minstrelsie :

Wide is the moor and clear the call of curlew as of yore,
Yon thin air tingles in the blood as keenly as before,
But 'reft of all poetic charm amid the moorland din
Lies stricken like a wounded bird—the Peesweep Inn.

Across the hill from Neilston we had wandered in the
spring,
We had crooned the Ballad of the Inn, we'd made its
numbers ring,
And felt new rapture in the theme while larks were
on the wing :

¹ See Ballads and Poems, published 1885, p. 252.

THE PEESEWEEP INN.

Slow-toiling teams upon the slopes drew lines of
 ruddy brown,
The peat-moss laughed in golden green where new-
 born streams come down,
And free from care or thought of care we longed
 once more to win
A long-forgotten glory in the PeesewEEP Inn.

We came upon it, bald and bare—a desecrated thing—
Round which a self-respecting ghost would be ashamed
 to cling !
The very painted peesewEEP frae the door had taken
 wing.
Nae gaucie guidwife's tappit hen, nor girnel ever fu',
To cheer the weary pilgrim soul, as they were wont
 to do ;
The whaups were there wi' eerie cry, the lift was
 clear abune,
But Ichabod ! oh, Ichabod !—the PeesewEEP Inn !

I care not for carousals in the tavern large and loud,
The wine of pleasure sours for me when jostled in the
 crowd,
But here was left one quiet nook to make the lowliest
 proud :

THE PEESEWEEP INN.

Ideal charm of crisp delight upon the moorland lay,
The mountain air and exercise cried "Hunger!" all
the way,
And at the end an open door, with drams and dreams
within,
And country cheer and welcome at the PeesewEEP Inn.

My curse on those reforming fiends who fouled the
rustic Spring,
Who broke the pitcher at the well where bards would
quaff and sing,
And make a music in their dreams to ravish clown and
king!
And though no more the merry rant of high poetic
glee
Can ring about the rafters and about the old roof-
tree,
We heard the cuckoo, loyal still, his annual song
begin
Right in the woodland region near the PeesewEEP Inn!

Outside upon the wall we sat to smoke a pipe at least,
And thank the Lord for those green fields, for flowers
and bird and beast;
(The poet-town afar will yield a plain prosaic feast!)

THE PEESEWEEP INN.

Wide Nature scorns defiling hands, and she at least is
ours,

Lords of the land alone are they who know the way-
side flowers ;

Yet Ballad-makers, hip and thigh ye sure must smite
the sin

That robbed us of one dear delight, the PeesewEEP
Inn !

The Poet.

HEAR the proud statesman, how he calls !
See the mailed warrior march in gleams !
Mark the gemmed Sultan rolled in shawls !
And without moan
The wandering poet wrapt in dreams.

A thousand years in humble dust
Those three have ceased from right and wrong .
Their honours and their deeds are rust :
The poet alone
Lives in the glory of his song !

The Quiet One.

Without the darkness thickens,
On the hearth the fire glows red—
And a quiet one is sleeping
In the chamber overhead.

And the little ones sit 't the firelight,
And prattle and laugh and play ;
Ah, little reck they of the sorrow
That will come with the dawn of day !

What feet are those on the gravel ?
What steps are those at the door ?
And what dim thing do they carry
Over the broad hall floor ?

Over the broad hall floor,
And up the cold stone stair ?—
Hush ! close the door, my darlings,
And shut out the wintry air.

THE QUIET ONE.

For the winter winds are bleak, dears,
And the winter mists are cold,—
But motherless lambs are the good God's care,
And He shelters them in His fold.

It is black, black night at the window,
But the little ones chatter and play,
And nothing they reckon of the sorrow
That will last them through life's long day.

The little ones chatter and play,
While the fire on the hearth glows red,
And I think on the quiet one sleeping
In the chamber overhead.

The Snow-man.

IN a field beside the city,
Of fair girls I reckoned three,
And three little lads were with them,
All as blithe as blithe could be :
Though a hail-shower dashed about them,
That they did not seem to know ;
For they all were busy working
At the first-fruits of the snow.

Fortune not in rags had wrapped them,
For they all were warmly clad,
From the smallest mantled maiden
To the tallest ulstered lad.
And they were not making snowballs
At the passers-by to throw,
But with a nobler purpose
Used the first-fruits of the snow.

THE SNOW-MAN.

Every little hand was toil-flushed,
And each cheek was warm with joy,
As they laughing laid their handfuls
Down beside the master boy :
He with zeal was deftly making,
As did some one long ago,
Such a form as might seem human
From the first-fruits of the snow.

So, it seems, in wildest winter
There's for some a world of mirth,
And when least there seems occasion
Then the grandest joy has birth.
These were happy gathering snow-flakes,
This was proud his art to show ;
And they all were glad together
With the first-fruits of the snow.

"The Sower went forth to Sow."

THE sower went forth to sow,
Laden with golden grain,
While the soft south winds did blow,
And the furrows were moistened again :
The Sower went forth to sow.

And the seed in the sweet springtime
Touched the earth with a thrill,
While the sower with musical chime
Sang and sowed with a will
The seed in the sweet springtime.

And this was the song he sung
All to the listening land,
As over its bosom he tenderly flung
The seed with liberal hand,—
This was the song he sung :

"THE SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW."

O, the Lord He cometh again,
Life and joy He brings,
With sunshine and shadow and rain,
Abundant to bless all things,
The Lord He cometh again.

And Mother of Green to thee
Glory of birth is given
To nourish these germs of life, to be
The bearer of bread from heaven ;
Mother of Green through thee.

Till over a jubilant world
Plenteous harvest is seen,
And the banner of love is unfurl'd
Where often that banner hath been,
Over a jubilant world."

So in the sweet springtime,
Touching the earth with a thrill,
So to a musical chime
The seed was sown with a will
And a hope in sweet springtime.

The Spedlins Bogle.

[In the dungeon of Spedlins Castle a young fellow was imprisoned by the Laird, and (by inadvertence merely !) allowed to starve to death. His ghost afterwards haunted the castle.]

SPEDLINS bumms wi' a bogle,
A bogle dour and strang :
Bible nor ban they fley him nane
Mair than an auld wives' sang.

The minister's gash, and like to dwam—
He's dune the best he dow ;
He's sained him but, he's sained him ben,
Yet aye he granes below.

Sair may the body sweat and psaum,
Sair may he sweat and pray :
But lang, lang will the bogle bide,
And lang be dreich to lay.

THE SPEDLINS BOGLE.

Spedlins aye was ill to thraw,
Lowin' like ony fire ;
'Twas kittle for an unco loon
To mell in spence or byre.

But little wist the Border lad,
That cam sae far too woo,
In whatna bed he was to lie,
Or a' the play was through.

And little wots our Mysie lass,
Liltin' frae bower to ha',
Whase kiss upon his mou has taen
The taste o' hers awa' !

There is a chaumer wee and wat
Twa faddom i' the yird :
And lang there may a wooer wait
Wearyin' for a word.

Oh weel may Spedlins' mornin' cup
Forget the wark yestreen :
But to the waukrife ear below
Lang, lang the nicht has been.

THE SPEDLINS BOGLE.

A wallet dauds at the Laird's belt,
A wallet and a key :
And the Laird's awa' to Embro',
And whae sae blithe as he ?

His lang law plea it's he maun win,
Tho' gowd and gear should tine :
And he maun ca' his counsel twa,
And pledge them deep in wine.

Around the table roared the bourd,
And fast the bicker ran,
Yet up he started mang them a',
A sick and sober man.

"Spedlins is up," the cry gaes roun',
Wi' mony a hotch and hoast :
They see the mirth fa' frae his face
As fa's the ash in frost.

He's mountit horse, he's airtit hame,
His cheek is like the deid :
His ee like ane that fears to see,—
The gude God be his speed !

THE SPEDLINS BOGLE.

By heich, by howe, to yon hostel
He rade but when he swam,
And when he wan to yon hostel
'Twas neither bite nor dram.

"Anither horse for God His sake,
For God His sake gie me!"
And whatna road he's ridden hame
His horse kens mair nor he.

He's turned the key, he's dupp'd the door,
Nae answer can he win,
But rattons fisslin' owre the flure,
And ane is left behin'.

Frae neuk to neuk the grey thing runs,
Runs and squeals in fear,
Like ane, red-haunded gript, that hears
The axe sing at his ear.

Sair may the minister sweat and psaum,
Sair may he sweat and pray :
But lang the thing will grane and gowl,
And lang be dreich to lay.

THE SPEDLINS BOGLE.

But never mint to Mysie lass,
Sae dowie out and in,
What ailed yon lad to come sae far,
An tak' the gee sae sune !

The Stone Laird.

CREEPER-CLAD Alyth nests into the hill,
A locket on Ochil's grey breast ;
Its old yellow face to the sunshine still
Is turned in a wistful quest :
The lairds are asleep in the silver glen,
Spent gusts of a stormy past,
If the kirkyard grass can bind such men,
Or the gravestones hold them fast.

The fifth of his name in that twisted line
Passed "gaily," they said, through life,
His coarse lips lapping at love and at wine,
And his home a place of strife.
He turned his son on the world adrift ;
And 'twas humour, in his eyes,
To make for his wife, as a birthday gift,
A coffin, her very size.

THE STONE LAIRD.

When he died they carved him in stone, and set
Him out on the velvet lawn,
Where the roses with fountain-spray are wet,
And the sunbeams come at dawn :
His rain-worn eyes, on a dial strained,
Watch time as it creeps away,
And you wonder if all wild souls are chained
Like that till the judgment day.

The Swallow.

THE palm-tree sent you to the pine
With tender greeting,
O welcome swallow !
From Libya over berg and brine
Here come you fleeting.
The skies laugh out ; the wild-flowers blow,
O blithe new-comer !
One swallow makes not summer—no,
But two make love, and love is summer.

The Unfeeling Foreigner.

THE day was dull and grey, the leaden sky
Down close upon the house-tops seemed to lie ;
And e'en the town-bred sparrows sat and cowered
With ruffled feathers. All the town looked soured.
And as I sat me still in thoughts forlorn,
Lo, in before me by the Fates was borne
A stranger man !—His eyes were dark and wide,
With thick black lashes, and beside,
His hair and beard were coal-black, and his nose—
A classic drooping one when in repose—
Was pinched with cold. He spoke, his words were few—
“ Goot sponges, Meester, shammy leathers, doo,”
And added, with a pleading piteous glance—
“ Sheep, only seexpence, Meester, gif me a chance ! ”

Ah, here, thought I, from some land foreign, dim,
A brother comes ; I will commune with him,

THE UNFEELING FOREIGNER.

And learn, perchance, some fresh and sweet new thought.
So thus I spoke, and with a manner fraught
With suavity,—

“Good friend, as I opine,
Thou’rt not a native of this land of mine,
But art of foreign birth—is that not true?”
“Goot sponges, Meester, shammy leathers, doo,”
He made reply, and then, with pleading glance,—
“Sheep, only seexpence, Meester, gif me a chance!”

“Well, well, of course, we’ll speak of that anon,
But tell to me, what country dost thou own?
Didst thou in youth sport where blue Danube flows?
Or where the Rhine rolls down ’tween pine-clad rows
Of storied castle rocks? Or where The Isles
Of classic Med’terranean beguiles
The dreamy tourist? Say, friend, what art thou?—
There’s sure some mystery ’neath thy sallow brow—
Art thou a Portuguese, or Spaniard bland,
A Pole, or from the German Fatherland?
Or possibly a Frenchman, might I say?—
Comprenez-vous—vous—parlez-vous français?”
My French he seemingly could not construe—
“Goot sponges, Meester, shammy leathers, doo,”
He merely said, repeating his old glance—
“Sheep, only seexpence, Meester, gif me a chance!”

THE UNFEELING FOREIGNER.

"Oh, wretch," I cried, "canst thou not leave awhile
Thy sordid sense of bargaining, and beguile
But one short hour with me in interchange
Of thought, and speech, whereby we both might range
O'er some new mental field! For instance, tell,
In leaving thine own land didst thou do well
In coming to this land of fog and grime?—
For well can I discern a summer clime
Within thy shadowy eyes, thine olive cheek :
What didst thou leave thy balmy shores to seek ?
Nay, I could sit me down and weep with you"—
"Goot sponges, Meester, shammy leathers, doo,"
He interrupted—then the former glance—
"Sheep, only seexpence, Meester, gif me a chance!"

This was too much, my patience could no more,
And so I hurriedly oped wide my door,
And thrust him forth into the murky street,
Whereat he stumbling fell. Then, as was meet,
My heart misgave me, so I lifted him,
And asked him to excuse my angry whim,—
"You've disappointed me, but let me say
One word, or two, before you go your way ;
Your experiences of life," quoth I, "are few"—
"Goot sponges, Meester, shammy leathers, doo ;"

THE UNFEELING FOREIGNER.

"Nay, hear me out, good friend, a word, perchance"—

"Sheep, only seexpence, Meester, gif me a chance!"

.

Ah, with such thorns and briers beset they be,

The paths of souls that love philosophy!

So in his palm a sixpence then I banged,

And, quickly turning, bade him go be hanged!

Three Voices.

I.—CYNIC TO POET.

HAD you been wise, you never had been poor,
Or knocked unanswered at a Christian door.
Why did you not in youth add store to store,
Knowing how fame by wealth is made secure ;
How genius even with fame is never sure
Of being statued upon any shore ;
How ragged virtue is a thing impure ;
And guinealess piety a saintly bore ?
Go to ! your honesty's a blank ; your purse
Is penniless ; your feet and back are bare.
Since you have earned but blows from Fortune's rod,
Die like a man, and leave the world your curse !
Heavens ! how you start, like any king ! and glare
With glorious eyes, as if you were a god !

THREE VOICES.

II.—POET TO CYNIC.

What voice is this that counsels with a sneer,
To end a life that fails to gather pence?
Surely in poverty is no offence?
Surely in mintage is no magic gear
To buy salvation in another sphere,
Where only grace and worth make competence?
Bare feet, bare back! Not these, but this, I fear—
Naked of heavenly knowledge going hence.
Who lives on less than little may be rich;
An empire's revenues o'erspent make poor:
'Tis not the crown, but the king's heart, is king,
And rears him high or rolls him in the ditch.
At councils of the gods I sing secure,
And all the stars sing with me as I sing.

III.—SAGE TO CYNIC AND POET.

Patience, brave friends! though hard it is to wait
The crowned event you wish that never comes,
While rude souls blow their trumps and beat their drums
Over mean trophies at a brazen gate,

THREE VOICES.

Where supple knees slip down on new estate.
Rather be poor, good hearts, than rich with sums
Earned by no deed of worth. Sweet are life's crumbs
To him who hungers through an honest fate !
Hope still remains, though far behind we pace
In the long progress led by dancing plume
And glancing spear, adown the jubilant wind.
Something there is to give us heart of grace :
The proud must serve the Moulder of their doom ;
God serves the humble-true, though halt and blind.

Thy Dear Soft Eyes.

THE world may wear its coldest face,
I bear within my heart a spell
That sheds sweet summer through my soul—
'Tis this, sweetheart, I love thee well,
And with the thought of thee
No thought unblest can dwell !

One word from thee, one kindly glance,
And then the darkest day is bright.
I think no wrong, I fear no chance,
I proudly walk in Heaven's own sight
Whene'er thy dear soft eyes
Beam on me with their light !

And in their glow all else doth pale—
The gold, the fame that vain men prize,
From these I turn with joyful soul
To bask me in the light that lies,
My love, my life, my pride,
Within thy dear soft eyes !

Tithonus to Aurora.

COME quickly, thou most beautiful! On what far
Eastern height art thou?

What stays thy radiant footsteps? In the dewy woods
I wait.

I rise to meet thee in the pines; to me life's one delight
art thou;

I wait thy coming. Art thou coy; doth shyness keep
thee late?

Come quickly from thy garden'd East. A joy in all
men's sight art thou;

To me more fair than mortal maid, more dear than
wealth or state,

More precious than the dreams of youth, more sweet
than sleep at night art thou—

The one undying loveliness defying time and fate!

The years grow grey, the world grows old,

Faith feeble, and devotion cold;

But thou, clear-eyed, with hair of gold,

Art shining in immortal youth!

TITHONUS TO AURORA.

Thy lovers, the primeval men,
Who sprang from dust are dust again,
But thou, strange beauty, now as then,
Art shining in immortal youth !

And race hath vanished after race,
And land and sea have changèd place,
And gods have passed, but thou, sweet face,
Art shining in immortal youth !

Undying, beautiful, divine, beloved, in time's despite—
art thou

Less loving ; do thy sleepless eyes ne'er cloud with
tender ruth ?

A goddess of the ancient world, and still the world's
delight art thou ;

And ages hence new men shall find thee shining in
immortal youth.

To James Hedderwick, LL.D.

(ON HIS UNANIMOUS ELECTION AS HON. PRESIDENT
OF THE GLASGOW BALLAD CLUB.)

OLD friend and poet, welcome as our Head !
Gladly indeed this tribute do we pay
To one who has so long held gracious sway
In letters, and poetic dew has shed
In those fine Cameos writ but to be read
And cast aside on topics of the day ;
Also to him who smoothed the rugged way
For genius which had else sunk down as lead !
Well have you sung the Lays of Middle Age,
In later years the Villa by the Sea ;
The proudest pageant on our city page
’Twas yours to praise in lofty poetry !
But let us sink the poet if we can
To greet the witty, wise, and genial man !

To the Hills of Lochgoil.

I COME wi' the spring, Hills,
To gaze, and depart
Wi' memories to lichten
And gladden the heart ;
For primrose, and blackbird,
And fair tasselled tree,
Shall hie frae your dells
To the city wi' me.

I come to you, Hills,
While your heaths are yet dun,
And the dry westlin' breeze
Needs a tempering sun ;
I come for a spray-draught,
Sae bracing and free,
And health to tak' back
To the city wi' me.

TO THE HILLS OF LOCHGOIL.

When summer is here, Hills,
Again I'll return,
To rest on your green knowes,
And drink frae the burn ;
Then auld and new lilt,
About love, grove, and lea,
You'll hear frae the laverock,
The cuckoo, and me.

I'll come to you, Hills,
When the foxglove's in bloom,
When proudly you'll show me
The goud o' your broom :
Then mirth and toil-joy,
In the lamb, and the bee,
Sweet day-dreams will send
▲ ^ To the city wi' me.

I'll see you again, Hills,
Ere winter has come,
When leaf-rustle saftens
The solemn wood-hum ;
When, though you've nae trilling
O' wanton bird-gee,
You'll send a linn-sang
To the city wi' me.

TO THE HILLS OF LOCHGOIL.

And e'en when the snaw-drifts
Lie frequent and fell,
When nane ken the place
O' the hiding blue-bell,
Amid your white wildness
I something shall see,
That's worth takin' hame
To the city wi' me.

How often, ye Hills,
Ye hae Heaven brocht sae near,
That voices o' angels
Fell saft on my ear ;
Then a' that is best,
At the end we maun dree,
Was shared for the warst
In the city—and me.

To the Muse.

AN APPEAL AND A THREAT.

O MUSE, vouchsafe a tunefu' strum,
Since my appointed hour has come ¹
To sing a sang,—just gie the lyre
Ae dirl o' true Euterpean fire;
'Twill serve to save my reputation,
And add another obligation
To those for which I am thy debtor,
By mony a rhyme and mony a letter.
Think o' the time we've kent each ither,
Mind o' the hours we've spent thegither,
What rhymes we've croon'd, what sangs we've sung,
What dreams we've dreamed when life was young.
'Tis nae great favour noo, I ask thee—
An epic, I admit, might task thee—

¹ Members of the Club must read an original poem or song when it comes to their turn.

TO THE MUSE.

But a' I want's a wee bit sang,—
A musefu' lyric, no that lang—
To show my genial brither singers
The lyre-chords still respect my fingers.
But thou art dumb! Say, art thou ailing?
Or is the "Divine Afflatus" failing?
Or are thy suitors noo sae mony,
Thou canst not spare enough for ony,
To lift them from the sordid level
On which the feck o' mortals trevel?
No answer! Weel, whate'er is wrang,
Thou maun be either thrawn or thrang,
To treat an auld flame sae unkin'ly,
Thou who wert born and bred divinely.
But sages and historians tell us,
E'en Goddesses are sometimes jealous;
And noo it seems the Immortal Nine,
Sprung o' the proud Olympian line,
Who inspire and guide poetic labours,
Possess this frailty like their neighbours!

I'll no admit I lo'e thee less,
Though times have altered, I confess,
Since, smitten by thy mystic glamour,
We held our first celestial amour.

TO THE MUSE.

I sought thee then morn, noon, and night,
Swoon'd at thy feet in dazed delight,
Fed on ambrosia from Parnassus,
Sipped nectar from enchanted glasses ;
But, when my swoon and dream were over,
What didst thou see—a puir, limp lover,
Wi' face and garments unco seedy—
In short, in every aspect—needy.
And so, warned by an empty larder,
I learned to calm my youthful ardour,
Knowing the mill would cease to clatter
If fed by wind instead o' watter.
Then for a round o' busy seasons,
For sound and economic reasons,
I walked and toyed wi' ither queans,
Endowed wi' more material means ;
But still I hoped when I had time
To pour my passion forth in rhyme,
And tell thee though youth's dream was over
I wasna less thy faithfu' lover.
But thou art jealous. Oh, for shame !
To link thy great supernal name
In this morose, inglorious fashion
Wi' sic a senseless human passion.
Thou canna see't? Weel, I have dune.
If 't seems to thee a mortal sin

TO THE MUSE.

To put a guid coat on ane's back,
And guard against the chance o' lack—
If yielding to the call o' reason
Be blamed as hymeneal treason,
Then fare-thee-weel, I'll leave off suing,—
When next we meet thou'lt do the wooing.

To the North Wind !

**BLOW, North Wind, blow ! from shores where white seas
thunder !**

**Round shining snows ; blow fierce, wild wind, blow
free :**

**Let thy shrill bugles shriek, as bergs that sunder
Shriek, shuddering to the sea.**

**Thro' days that lagged as years, yon sun hath sickened
Behind foul fogs ; its light made mock of light
Where spectral men crawled slow, where raw mists
thickened
To chill, mist-clotted night,—**

**Night, where the stars were dead ; where vapours blotted
The mystic glamour from the ancient sky ;
Where sodden fields lay dark with grain that rotted ;
Where sad men ceased to sigh.**

TO THE NORTH WIND!

But lo! this stalwart wind has blown, and harried
The nightmare fog back to its dim, foul den;
While hardy joy, and timid hope that tarried,
Dance in the hearts of men!

Blow, freedom, blow from shores where men have severed
Their shackled lives from bonds of thought and deed;
Where dastard wrong by desperate right was shivered,
When slaves from knaves were freed!

Sweep o'er this land: this land where stifled languors
Lie on men's souls; blow warning blasts which
teach,—
Though men be dumb their dreadful eyes gleam angers
Prophetic of grim speech.

No wind art thou to drift a song, or dally
With timid flutings round a lady's bower;
Thy righteous fife and drum wake war's wild rally
Where gross peace dreams its hour.

Blow, freedom, blow; let not thy thunders slacken;
Sheer justice breaks on nations like sheer wrath,
When fogs which blind, and ancient wrongs which
blacken,
Flee, shrieking, from thy path!

Trafalgar.

Oh, the merry bells of Chester, ancient Chester on the
Dee!

On that glittering autumn morning, eighteen-five,
Every Englishman was glad to be alive.

It was good to breathe this English air, to see
English earth, with autumn field and reddening tree,
And to hear the bells of Chester, ancient Chester on
the Dee.

For like morning-stars together, sweet and shrill,

In a blithe recurrent cycle

Sang St Peter and St Michael,

John the Baptist and St Mary on the Hill;

And the quick, exulting changes of their peal

Made the heavens above them laugh and the jubilant
city reel.

In the streets the crowds were cheering. Like a shout

From each spire the bickering bunting rollicked out.

TRAFALGAR.

Oh that buoyant autumn morning, eighteen-five,
Every Englishman rejoiced to be alive ;
And the heart of England throbbed from sea to sea
As the joy-bells clashed in Chester, jovial Chester on
the Dee !

Hark ! in pauses of the revel—sole and slow—
Old St Werburgh swung a heavy note of woe !
Hark ! between the jocund peals, a single toll,
Stern and muffled, marked the passing of a soul !
English hearts were sad that day as sad could be—
English eyes so filled with tears they scarce could see,—
All the joy was dashed with grief in ancient Chester on
the Dee.

Loss and triumph—joy and sorrow ! Far away
Drave the great fight's wreckage down Trafalgar Bay.
Oh that glorious autumn morning, eighteen-five,
Every Englishman was proud to be alive !
For the power of France was shattered on the sea—
But ten sail left of her thirty sail and three.
Yet sad were English men as sad could be,
For that, somewhere o'er the foreign wave, they knew
Home to English ground and grass the dust of Nelson
drew.

TRAFALGAR.

Would to God that on that morning, eighteen-five,
England's greatest man of all had been alive,
If *but* to breathe this English air, to see
English earth, with autumn field and reddening tree,
And to hear the bells of Chester, joyful Chester on
the Dee !

Tussilago.

HOMELY tussilago,
Of what art thou possesst,
That this unwonted pleasure
Thou wakenest in my breast?
Joy welletth like a fountain
Whose source we canna see :
Homely tussilago,
What angel dwells in thee?

Mavis, merle, and laverock,
Though I heard them a'
Welcoming the dawning,
Or soothing day awa',
Ne'er a thrill o' gladness
Brang their lays to me,
Homely tussilago,
Till I met with thee.

TUSSILAGO.

Cranreuch in the morning
Silers bush and sod ;
Still the gowans slumber
'Neath the cauld grey clod ;
E'en the willow, budless,
Bends aboon the burn :
What to thee so early
Speaks o' spring's return ?

In the misty hollow
A drooping tuft o' green,
Whare nae grasses bield thee,
Wae-like art thou seen ;
But ae speck o' azure
Through a breaking cloud,
Ae kind gleam o' sunshine,
Turns thy green to goud.

Eastlin' winds assail thee ;
Storms that rend the tree,
Cast the broken branches
O'er thee on the lea ;
But thou waitest patient,
Wrapt in hopefu' glee,
For the coming April
And the welcome bee.

TUSSILAGO.

Never kindly greeting
 Frae an absent frien',
Never welcome smiling
 Where feil frowns had been,
Rarely love-light beaming
 In a maiden's e'e,
Homely tussilago,
 Warms the heart like thee.

Two Pictures.

I.

THE COLLIER.

THERE lived a lass in yonder toun,
Wi' sunny face and locks o' broon,
And she by sacred vows was boun'
To wed a comely collier.

The laddie's teens were hardly gane ;
His worldly gear was next to nane ;
But she was hopefu', young, and fain,
And dearly lo'ed her collier.

Her mither warned her aft and lang,
And proved by scraps o' Scottish sang,
And screeds o' psalms, hoo far 'twas wrang
In ane to wed a collier ;
For though he was a strappin' chiel,
And vowed a love as true as steel,
And micht be honest, kind, and leal—
Yet aye he was a collier.

TWO PICTURES.

E'en mithers needna fecht wi' fate—
The lassie weel had waled her mate,—
She wadna change her mind nor wait :
 What though he was a collier ?
His wages were a croon a day,
Wi' fortnicht's pays, and uplifts tae.
Wrights, smiths, and cobblers ! What were they,
 Compared to sic a collier ?

Their days flew by wi' lichtnin' flicht,—
'Twas hardly mornin' till 'twas nicht ;
There ne'er was woman's heart sae licht,
 Nor sic a happy collier.
And aften lownly Nellie laughed,
The while her cup o' joy she quaffed,
And wonner'd folk could be sae daft
 As wish her bye her collier.

But bairns cam' hame and stauns cam' roun',
A trade depressed brang wages down,
Till misery and the bare hauf-croon
 O'ertook her wi' her collier.
Then debts increased, arrestments cam',
And recklessness took haud o' Tam ;
By hook or crook he'd hae his dram—
 They said 'twas like a collier.

TWO PICTURES.

Then sighs were frequent—tears were seen
At times in Nelly's hazel een,
And whiles she wonner't how 'twould been
If she had missed her collier.
In misery's mire they deeper sank ;
Their life o' joy was noo a' blank,—
Ah ! maidens, ye the Lord should thank,
That guides ye bye a collier.

See Nelly cowerin' owre her fire—
The "sloven" writ in her attire ;
Nae higher noo she daur aspire
Than to her worthless collier.
And hear her voice ! Alas ! she swears,
And curses e'en amid her tears ;
And kicks and cuffs the duddie dears
Wha's daddie is her collier.

II.

AULD NICOL RAY.

Auld Nicol Ray was a collier in youth,
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay,
And burnt his first caunle east owre,—
A wonnerfu' callan' was auld Nicol Ray.

TWO PICTURES.

Aye at the first cry o' his mither he rase,
And ne'er was the last tae hae on his pit claes :
While sighin' and gantin' far aulder folk lay,
Awa' tae his wark trottit auld Nicol Ray.

Auld Nicol Ray aye in stature was wee,
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay,
But mair than his share o' a speerit had he,—
Sair wark had nae terrors for Auld Nicol Ray.
He ne'er in his motions had ocht o' the snail ;
Could bring in his rake whare a bigger wad fail ;
But his back got a set that it wears till this day,—
Sair roun't in the shouthers is auld Nicol Ray.

Auld Nicol Ray gat but little book lair,
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay ;
He kent how tae read, but he kent little mair,
Yet ne'er at the loss grumbled auld Nicol Ray.
His head was weel packit wi' Scotch common-sense,
He kent that a pound had its bairn time in pence,
And early began bye his pennies to lay,—
Aye patient and hopefu' was auld Nicol Ray.

Auld Nicol Ray got his 'prenticeship through,
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay,
And then at a spree for the first time gat fu',—
A lucky mischance that tae auld Nicol Ray.

TWO PICTURES.

He sware against drink, an' he keepit his vow,
And mony a saved groat was the upshot, I trow ;
Yet care ne'er the mair seemed tae come in his way—
Frae mornin' till e'en whistled auld Nicol Ray.

But auld Nicol Ray, as he wheep't awa',
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay,
A something before him worth toiling for saw,
And aye creepin' nearer't seemed Auld Nicol Ray.
Yet thinknae his heart had nae saft place ava',—
He lo'ed a douce lassie fu' sonsie and braw.
If she can but wait we'll be cozy some day,
And surely she'll wait, hopit auld Nicol Ray.

Auld Nicol Ray gat a pit o' his ain,
Thrifty and gay, thrifty and gay—
A han'y ebb place wi' a ban' o' black stane,—
“At last I hae gotten't,” thocht auld Nicol Ray.
Guid wealth cam' in faster than e'er he had thocht ;
He biggit his hoose and his lassie's love socht.
Yon's their hoose that ye see on the brae,—
Weel worth sic an Eden is auld Nicol Ray.

Two Toilers.

BEHOLD him pass thro' tranquil fields,
While twilight shadows round him lie ;
Though bowed and burdened, yet he yields
Grace to yon gracious sky.

The grace of simple tasks well done,
That regal human grace is his ;
Slow steps he home at set of sun,
Nor knows how great he is.

Beside him goes his little lass
Singing, nor deems the day too long :
She is of those wise souls who pass
Straightway from toil to song.

These two, how rich in state they be,
Plodding athwart the crimsoned west :
She sings of happy heart, and he
Finds in her song his rest.

Wauken up.

WULL I hae to speak again
To thae weans o' mine?
Eicht o'clock, an' weel I ken
The schule gangs in at nine.
Little hauds me but to gang
An' fetch the muckle whup—
Oh, ye sleepy-heidet rogues,
Wull you wauken up?

Never mither had sic faught—
No' a moment's ease :
Cleed Tam as ye like, at nicht
His breeks are through the knees.
Thread is no' for him ava'—
It never hauds the grup ;
Maun I speak again, ye rogues—
Wull you wauken up?

WAUKEN UP.

Tam, the very last to bed,
He winna rise ava' ;
Last to get his books an' sklate,
Last to won awa'.
Sic a limb for tricks an' fun—
Heeds na' what I say.
Rab an' Jamie—but thae plagues,
Wull they sleep a' day ?

Here they come, the three at ance,
Lookin' gleg an' fell ;
Hoo they ken their bits o' claes
Beats me fair to tell.
Wash your wee bit faces clean,
An' here's your bite an' sup ;
Never was mair wiselike bairns,
Noo they're wauken'd up.

There, the three are aff at last,
I watch them frae the door,—
That Tam, he's at his tricks again,
I coont them by the score.
He's put his fit afore wee Rab,
An' coupit Jamie doon ;
Could I lay my han's on him,
I'd mak' him claw his croon.

WAUKEN UP.

Noo to get my wark on han'
I'll hae a busy day,
But losh ! the house is unco quate
Since they're a' away.
A dizzen times I'll look the clock
When it comes roun' to three,
For, cuddlin' doon or waukenin' up,
They're dear, dear bairns to me.

Wee Cockielorum.

I WILL sing a sang, gudewife,
An' ye will join the choras ;
We'll gar the roof an' rafters ring,
As gin there were a score o's ;
Mak' sic a din the folks will think
We're dancin' Tullochgorum,
An' a' to please our lammie-loo,
Our Wee Cockielorum.

He's mammie's pet, an' daddie's doo,
An' a' the toun adore 'im ;
For, oh ! he's just a lammie-loo,
Our Wee Cockielorum.

But an' ben, an' oot an' in,
He flits just like a sun-glaff ;
An' fifty times in ilka 'oor
He'd gar a hooded nun laugh ;

WEE COCKIELORUM.

There never was his marrow born
In a' the warld afore 'im ;
There ne'er will be his like again,
The Wee Cockielorum.

There's joy within the birken bush
When birdies bield thegither,
An' ae wee tot sits chirpin' 'tween
Its faither an' its mither ;
There's joy within our house at e'en,
An' meikle variorum,—
An' aye the source o' a' the mirth
Is Wee Cockielorum.

Ye're laughin', wife ! I wat yer thocht
Is sib to what my ain is ;
An' by the glintin' o' yer ee
I ken yer heart fu' fain is ;
Blessin's on his sunny pow !
Bless the heart that bore 'im,
Bless the powers that made him ours,
The Wee Cockielorum.

Heaven's hand be owre the head
O' ilka bonnie bairnie !
Guide them fair that hae their care—
Grant them grace, an' spare na' !

WEE COCKIELORUM.

Is he born that lo'es na' bairns,
In conscience I abhor 'im ;
Yet, he wad mend, if he but kenn'd
Our Wee Cockielorum.

He's mammie's pet, an' daddie's doo,
An' a' the toun adore 'im ;
For, oh ! he's just a lammie-loo,
Our Wee Cockielorum.

Winter Rhymes.

THE CRAW.

THE crows are pu'in' twigs again, wi' busy bill and wing ;
Or far aboon their chosen homes in gracefu' curves they
swing,—

And he that nearest soars to heaven is chosen lord and
king.

And his shall be the voice that gives command to sit
or fly,

And she shall be his queen on whom he looks with
favouring eye,—

And none may touch his chosen love, and none shall
dare to try.

And he shall have his choice, and choose the tallest,
slimmest tree,

Where none shall dare to lay a twig except his queen
and he ;

And he when guns appear shall in the post of honour be.

WINTER RHYMES.

How wondrous is the wisdom men may in their methods
see ;
Though they may caw in conclave when the frost has
bound the lea,
And own that like the plans o' men their own may gang
aglee.

For there may come a time when they to cities must
repair,
And while they gladden humble eyes must feast on
humble fare,
And gladdening humble eyes may be their only pleasure
there.

We like in summer time to see the jolly reivin' crew,
Who makes the land his larder ; feasts at will, and flees
awa' ;
For sic a life we ken would be a pleasure to us a'.

And so when deep snow lingers, and no green field tunes
the eye,
Goodwives of crusts are careless—e'en before their doors
they lie,—
But aye some keen-eyed crew drops down among them
from the sky.

WINTER RHYMES.

But let us hope that Nature will for once forgo all whim,
And trust that when the snowdrop comes his nest will
 be in trim ;
And we'll be wishing for ourselves the while we wish
 for him.

THE STARLING.

'Twas twelve sparkling starlings upon a bare tree,
That twittered in concert and sang merrily,
And they had no listeners but Winter and me.

"Now what are they saying?" I musingly said,
"And what do they mean by this tuneful parade,
While Winter's still ruler of meadow and glade?"

To me they were singing, "What soft wind is this?
Is this not the sunshine that brings us all bliss?
Unless we make haste the sweet spring we shall miss."

To Winter they sang: "Why so soon pass away?
The sun's low at noon yet, and short is the day."
He smiled like the Spring, but had nothing to say.

I reasoned it thus: "Yes, so far, all goes well!
There are buds in the forest and flowers in the dell;
But what Winter's meaning no mortal can tell."

Woodland Promptings.

I CROSSED the brook's brown stepping-stones ; I rested
on the grass,—
A sunny floor of blades and flowers, blue-roofed with
skies of glass.
High up the silvery summer clouds in windless slumber
lay ;
Half-slumbering in a heavenly calm lay I as hush'd
as they.
The midges wove a fairy dance beneath the fir's dark
eaves ;
The shimmer of the water lit the under-sides of leaves.
And slowly, slowly, slowly, as I lay, I grew aware
Of some strange sense of waiting in the eager morning
air.
The grave trees seemed expectant ; long thrills of foliage
came,
Like blithe precursors running in. A bright bird, like
a flame,

WOODLAND PROMPTINGS.

Lit all the wood with watchfulness, "She's coming, coming here!"

The tumbling brook was full of sounds, like voices drawing near.

The sylvan arches, winding from the dim, green distance, made

A sweet approach for unknown footsteps, fleck'd with sun and shade.

And I, too, waited, dreamed, expected, longed for who can say

What shape of passionate loveliness?

But no one came that way.

Yon wee White House.

YON wee white house among the trees,
Beside the sandy shore,
Wi' roses on the gable end
And fuchsias at the door—
It faded slowly from my sight,
Across the gurly sea ;
But ah ! it is the dearest spot
In all the world for me.

By day, I ken the gowden sun
Beams on my bairnies twa ;
And whiles they warstle on the green,
And whiles they kick the ba'.
By night, I think, yon wandering moon
That looms alang the deep,
Keeks in on Nannie, mending claes
For twa wee rogues asleep.

YON WEE WHITE HOUSE.

The Duke has got his castles four,
Each wi' a different name,
And silken beds, and roofs of gold,—
But where has he his hame?
The lark that skims the wide blue air
Back to his nest maun flee,—
And fondly still my thoughts return
Hame, wife and weans, to thee!

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